"THE ONE DARK STAIN," A THRILLER, BY MAJOR MONTFORT, NEXT WEEK

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A HUSBAND'S SIN; or, The Lure of Love.

By Constance Beatrice Willard.

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CHAPTER V.

THE VOICE OF PATERNITY.

At just this special time a certain coterie almost governed the select portion of New York society, and among them, Stephen Clayton, Vance Wizzard, Phayston Gerrymander and Quenton Weymouth, were exceedingly prominent. To be admitted into the special set they formed, was hallmark of success, a circle within a circle, and of them, only Stephen was married, although Weymouth was a widower.

The men had been fast friends from college days, and had kept together as they entered business and social life. Weymouth's marriage had occurred before he entered college, and its only trace was a boy, now at school, to whom Weymouth occasionally referred. He was the eldest of the four, but no one realized that his son could be much more than a child, until one day not long after Love's unfortunate encounter with the Indian Princess, a very tall, well-mannered young man entered the club house affected by Weymouth, and sent up his card to that gentleman.

The four were sitting about in the smoking-room, exchanging a few confidences, and many trite remarks, and Weymouth stretched out his hand for the card, presented by the servant.

He gazed at it for a few moments, then passed it to Stephen:

"Steve, read it. I think I'm losing my eyesight, egad."

Stephen took the correct bit of pasteboard, and read:

"Mr. Varion Weymouth."

"I say, Quen," he began, gazing at the little exquisite, who with his carefully made toilet, well fitting clothing, looked no older than the youngest of the crowd, Stephen himself.

"Don't ask me." Weymouth said languidly, then motioning the servant, "Show the gentleman up."

"The lad's taking to cards early," suggested Vance Wizzard with a laugh.

Weymouth shook his head slowly, when the door opened and a young fellow of whom any father might well be proud, came into the room, quietly and masterfully, elbowing aside the servant who would have announced him.

"Good evening, father," he said pleasantly, crossing the room, and holding out his strong, well-made, but tanned hand to Weymouth.

"Eh! Oh, yes, how do!" cried that gentleman, looking up in astonishment at the boy.

"I have left school. Fact, I did not like it. It's a child's school, and I want to go at something real," he continued pleasantly, taking a chair by his father, and not appearing at all disturbed at the presence of the other three.

"Bless my life, Varion, this can't be you!" he said almost fretfully, gazing up at the handsome, fresh young face, for the son was head and shoulders taller than the father.

"But it is, Dad," came with a merry peal of laughter. "I have grown some. You see, I'm nineteen, and a little overgrown for my age," and there was a twinkle in his bright blue eyes.

"I should say so. Lad, when did I see you last?" asked the father.

"Four years ago, Dad, and I was a pretty hefty boy then. Still, I suppose it was my going in for athletics that put on extra allowance, but it's all good, firm flesh. Just feel that," doubling his arm, and presenting such a solid bunch of muscle as his father had not seen for many a long day.

"That's good, eh, Vance?" Weymouth said, turning to Wizzard.

"Fine, but introduce us, Quenton." Vance replied, feeling attracted towards the fresh appearing young fellow, who was so evidently without unpleasant guile.

The introductions which followed were pleasant, and then the five had quite a talk, after which Weymouth rang for drinks.

"Yours?" he asked his son as a matter of course. Without any embarrassment, the lad replied easily:

"Nothing for me. I'm so big I have to keep on the table all the while."

"Don't you smoke, either?" asked his father slowly.

"Oh, sir; some reason," and he smiled so pleasantly, that what might have been an unpleasant scene, passed over quietly. To think of Quenton Weymouth's son, neither smoking or drinking was something to notice.

The young man was old for his years, in one way. While at the "child's" school he had put in his time well, and learned many things not usually taught. He had a good smattering of medicine, and in reply to his father's questions, replied with that pleasant laugh of his which made friends for him everywhere.

"Yes, I think, Dad, if you don't mind, I will go in for medicine, after a little. For the present I want to get my fill of athletics. I am interested in building up the body by muscular development, just as the mind can be expanded by mental exercises," and his pleasant grin showed his strong, white teeth.

All of the men felt astonished, but they liked him, they could not help it, and showered hospitalities upon the lad.

"If Dad can put me up and I won't be in his way, I think I had best go with him," Varion said, at last, and although he was still bewildered, the father would have been very much hurt had Varion decided any differently.

In the few hours he had been talking with the four, however, the boy had gained a very correct estimate of the men, and they were listed in his brain about in this order:

"Father,—selfish on the surface, but true gold deep down. In time we will love each other dearly.

"Vance Wizzard,—pretends to be shallow, but is alive to pretty much all that is going

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on. Will like him; hopes he likes me.

"Phayeton Derrymander,—don't quite like him. Most too effusive. Think he borrows both money and brains.

"Stephen Clayton,—a good fellow, but not deep enough. Easily swayed, with violent temper. Used to having his own way. Somehow feel I'm going to have some unpleasant dealings with him."

It was strange how nearly he came to forming a correct estimate of these four men, with whom he was to be so closely associated.

The five strolled out of the club house, and on they did so. Love drove past with a friend of hers, Mrs. Grayson, a society matron of perhaps twenty-eight. In the introductions which followed, Varion caught the names indistinctly, and thought that Love said Miss Grayson and Mrs. Grayson, Mrs. Clayton. That slight mistake laid the foundation for years of untold misery, for, thinking her but the girl she looked, Varion, young, ardent, enthusiastic, and until this very moment heart-free, fell desperately in love with the wife of the man whose hand he had but a moment before grasped in friendship.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOICE OF DANGER.

Varion tried hard to get acquainted with the father, but not nearly as did his father with him. For the past twenty years Quenton Weymouth had been a young man himself, and he evidently discovered the romance of his youth represented by this grown man, and lost in a strange torpor. As yet his fatherhood had not been awakened, but he felt a yearning towards the stalwart young fellow, and he was exceedingly proud of him.

The boy's talk astounded him, for while there was not a trace of the pedant about him, he showed that he had read and studied well.

"You ought to have been in college before this," Weymouth muttered.

"Well, I did mention it pretty often, but you made no reply, so I thought it best to just come on."

"No, I said nothing about it." Weymouth said slowly, thinking remorsefully of the letters from his son, which he had torn up unread, knowing that he was not interested in them.

"I suppose my letters were not very interesting"; the father asked hesitatingly, remembering as well his own duty letters, at certain intervals, when he sent the customary checks.

"Not exactly," returned the son in his cheerful way. "I used to think you had a kind of model. They were about like this:

" 'My Dear Son:—

" 'I am pleased at the report made me of your progress and at the sentiments you express in your letters. Whatever you want, be yours, of course, but I believe it best you learn the management of money, and so I enclose you ——. If this is not enough, write me, and I will send what is needed.

" 'Your affectionate father,' etc."

"Were they as bad as that?" Weymouth asked, flushing again.

"Even worse at times. I realised that you didn't read my letters, and at first I felt sorry bad about it, and then I said I would sometime present myself, and see if I pleased you any better than my letters. Pyramid, Dad, as man to man, do I?"

"Well, son, to tell the truth, as I did not read the letters, I cannot make comparisons, but if the letters were anything as good as my boy, I have lost a good deal by not reading them," and then the two walked along in silence, for in that confession Quenton Weymouth dropped his youth, and became the father.

The two found a great deal to talk about, and Weymouth's haunts knew him not that night, for he listened to the plans of his son, and was prouder than he could have believed to know what a brilliant future evidently lay before him.

"You see, Dad, I don't believe so much in drugs, though a good physician must know all about them. Use and abuses, and in proper training, eating and exercise. I would like to go through a regular medical course, and clean take my fling with my hobby. I'll pick up a sanatorium, and work off some of my enthusiasm," and he laughed.

"But what of your amusements?" asked the father.

"Take them as I go along," was the quick reply.

"And society?"

"Forgive me, Dad, but I don't think I'll want much on it."

"You are but nineteen," half sneered the elder man. It was their first jar.

"True, but, father, I have lived almost alone for the past four years, and each day contained a good many hours, which I had to fill up. I'm older in some things than you," and Quenton Weymouth realised that this was true.

"I suppose you have had your affair of the heart, had it broken and are now a woebegone-looking boy," the father, speaking in a tone the son did not like.

The young man flushed, as her replied quite simply:

"No, I haven't given much thought to women, father. I've had to work, and work day," and across his vision came the memory of the girl Quenton She had ever seen. Eyes like wood violets, hair like spun gold, a witching presence and a voice like some haunting melody.

"It is a pleasure to meet you."

The father knew something was passing in the mind of the young man, so he then fancied, and suggested that they better go to bed and be ready for a full day.

Varion nodded pleasantly, and felt asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow, but his father tossed for hours, making plans, and thinking over all he intended to do for this boy of his.

Yet, when the morrow came, he remembered he had engagements that he decided to go in advance to prepare for his son's arrival, and he was also in a good deal known in society, in spite of the youth's objections, and he had only a few days before him, suggesting an afternoon at Madison Square Gardens.

Varion followed his father's instructions, was bored, for their tastes did not agree, and he was also in a good deal known to the young heart throbbing over the love which had sprung into being at the sight of Love Clayton's exquisite face.

The sad pity of it all! If he had known that she, the wife of a wife, while he might have admired her, he could not have felt that wild, mad longing to gaze upon her once more.

It wonder if she goes into society. If she does, I think I will see a little of it, little as I think it would amuse me ordinarily."

Such a combination! I wonder what is her first name? Perhaps Violet, from her eyes, and then that delicious Southern accent! I wonder if it is possible for me to win her. I know so little and am such a boy yet. Well, she's nothing but a girl, herself," he added, not knowing that a wedding ring had cut the white flesh of the left hand, and that a wife's duties were hers.

Reaching the Gardens, he secured a seat near the end of the amphitheater, directly in front of the place where the daring young automobilist, "Mme. Daro," was to alight after giving her, to him, astounding performance.

"It's a great thing," he thought as he studied his program. "Reads well: 'Mme. Daro, the young and beautiful automobilist, the wonder of the century, in her daredevil, death-defying dash down a 30-degree incline, leaping lightly into space, turns a complete somersault, and lands gracefully and easily at the raised incline. Positively the world's greatest wonder.'

Varion felt a great desire to laugh come over him. "Think of the black marks that would have been given me over all that alliteration! But, Varion, you've got to forget that school, and look at things from a man's standpoint," and he began to study attentively the remainder of the program.

After many exceedingly wonderful acts, the ring was cleared for the final one. A crowd of "rupers" proceeded to rapidly erect the huge toboggan on which the act was to take place. A long, raised incline, with a bar passing down the middle, was erected at a dangerous-looking slant, the end of which turned under like the tail of the letter S, being perhaps forty feet from the ground. Back of this, about twenty feet, stood the "receiver," on which the automobile was to land after its dangerous flight, which space was ended, and also padding, extended to the ground.

Varion had been duly inspected by a pompous individual in silk hat. Mme. Daro entered the ring, and Varion noted that, as the picture had stated, she was young and beautiful. The fact of the matter was, although she was but 20 years old, she had left high school but a few weeks prior to the beginning of the engagement, at the circus, and that she had been chosen from a large number of young girls anxious to make this perilous ride.

It was a good thing Varion knew nothing of this, as it was, he shook his head, and felt uneasy, although he tried to console himself by thinking:

"She probably is well paid, and thoroughly trained, still, if I could get out of here without making a scene I would do so. Human life is too precious to be used so lightly."

The young girl looked very frail and exquisite in every way, bowing to right and left, as she seated herself in the automobile, which was then raised to the top of the incline.

The girl seemed to hold her breath as she settled herself firmly in the seat, her hands grasping the steering wheel. Her face was almost as tiny as those of a child. Varion thought to himself that she looked pale beneath the rouge on her cheeks, and he confessed to himself that he wished he had not come. Somehow or other, a sweet, dear voice which had been ringing in his ears since the day before saying hastily:

"No, I tell you, no. I will not stay a minute longer. I cannot!"

Varion turned. There, just behind him was a frightened face, framed in an elegant Brooklyn suit, with fluffy white furs, struggling with several ladies who were striving to him.

As long as he lives, Varion Weymouth will never forget the moment and what followed.

Coming to the city the day before, still a lad, although far older than his years, developed by his lonely life and studious habits, he became a man then.

He tasted in that instant the deepest bliss as well as the full amount of pain his entire life could ever know, but at the same time his mind was working rapidly. He saw exactly what was happening, the woman he loved was in mighty danger, overcome by her horror of the terrible nerve-straining episode.

He, a man, strong physically, and with nerves like iron, could not look on unmoved, while a girl was placed in awful jeopardy, and if not he, how could a dainty little thing like the "lady of his soul," as he had already named Love?

All this flashed through his mind so quickly that it was only afterwards that he remembered. In the moment of danger, his great desire was to keep all harm from Her, and rescue Her, for he saw that she was struggling to reach the cliffs, the others trying to restrain her; he knew he was right. In another moment Love Clayton had torn herself free and had started to cross the huge arena, and at the same time the ringmaster's voice had called steadily:

"Are you ready?"

"All ready," came the answer from above.

"Then—GO!"

Like a frightened bird the automobile shot from the spring which held it—like a shot from a cannon, and a great gasp came from the crowd, as it noted the speed with which it started down the incline.

But with that gasp came a greater one, a moan, which swelled into a great cry, as the crowd with bated breath saw the slight form of a young and beautiful woman come from the aisle nearest the "receiver" and start to dash frantically across the ring. In that fraction of a second spectators among that crowd who realized what must inevitably be the outcome, lived a lifetime. Those who witnessed could not help but see that the great machine in its flight was hitting the receiver, must dash on and on, and crush this woman before she, in her nervous panic, could realise her danger. Quicker as they had been to realize this, however, they were not quick to see, as one who had been sitting directly on the aisle. Like a flash Varion Weymouth had vaulted over the low railing which separated the seat in which he was sitting from the arena, and dashed after the woman he loved. Like the others he had seen what must be the end of the affair, but unlike the others he did not hesitate, but rushed madly across the ring, while the crowd, now breathless, watched the unequal race.

It could not have been long. The program stated that it took but ten seconds to complete the whole journey, but it seemed to Varion that the dash across the ring consumed hours.

"Oh, God!" he cried to himself. "Oh, God, let me save her! Let me save her!"

And this was the cry on his lips as he threw himself forward in a last despairing spring, and flung Love far out of danger, but as the great machine rushed blind on his side, and hurled him, a huddled, limp form, into the nawdust twenty feet away.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WORD OF APPREHENSION.

While snow and ice kept the North bound in silence, the roses bloomed in the old garden, while the air was sweet and the early flowers of her eyes made the ground a wonderful variegated carpet.

Gazing down at them, and fanning that he saw in them the eyes of the little one he had so loved and laid out, a handsome man, handsomer than ever, for the great grief that had overwhelmed him had left a trace on his face, and giving an added charm to his already melancholy eyes.

Standing a little above him on the wide steps, the stones of which were green with moss, was Love Clayton, a woman whose name was great among scholars, although he dear one was young, and whose every act anything modern, that he seemed to be moving in a dream.

Professor Thornton had once more adjusted the glasses constantly falling from his aristocratic nose, and said in his low, but absent-minded voice:

"I will read the letter again, Kerie,

Weak Kidneys

It is of but little use to try to doctor the kidneys through the stomach. Nearly all the ailments for the kidneys are not alone to blame for their weaknesses and miseries. They have no power—no self-control. They are operated and controlled by a nerve force which is largely responsible for their strength, or weakness. If the kidneys receive a strong supply the kidneys are strong and healthy. If the kidneys have a weak supply it is due to the inevitable result—kidney trouble.

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though I must confess that I see nothing of what you speak."

"But, Professor, I'm right," was the quick reply. "Our old Love does not speak in the last letter. Even with you, her own father, she is constrained. The Love who left us would never have filled twelve pages with descriptions of gay doings and dresses. What do we care what she wears? She is always lovely. What we want is herself. We want to see her soul mirrored as we used to see it when she was here with us, who truly love her."

The Professor rubbed his white head and said quietly:

"She is no longer our Love, Kerle."

The young man flinched, as nothing else would have made him, then he drooped his dark head. It was true, she was no longer their Love."

"The child has been introduced into a new life, and enjoys her pretty gowns and gay doings. Let her, Kerle. Misery comes to all egos soon enough; let her laugh and dance while she may."

"But she is not laughing and dancing," cried the young man impulsively. "Just read what I have underscored."

Again the glasses were adjusted, and the father read:

"Oh, good times, father. We are scarcely ever at home. I'm a bit of a little foolish thing, though, when I think of the good time among the roses, and more learning my manners. Oh, every day is so crammed here, and all so much older than I. They all seem fairly aged."

"That sounds as though she were perfectly happy?" demanded Kerle Davenport.

"No, I do not. And I am very anxious to know much of anything outside her husband's passion. Love, with all her little old-fashioned gallantry not comprehending anything of the demands made upon a society woman in one of our great cities.

"Then read there, on the last page," continued Kerle Davenport, his voice trembling.

"When you were real young, father, did you ever wish to be old and wise, just dreadfully wise, so you'd never do wrong? That is a silly question. I'm silly most of the time. But remember father, that I have such beautiful, lovely gowns, jewels, a fine house, and that my husband takes me to the grandest affairs, so grand you'd be lost here, so that you can see how happy is your little girl.

"Do you see, not a word in all the letter of her husband's love. Professor, I gave her up to him, but I believe I did her a great wrong. Stephen Clayton is one of the kind of men we come across down here but rarely, thank God! An imperious lover, once married, he appears to think his duty with regard to his wife's heart ended. She is his property, a beautiful bit of human flesh to be decorated and show off, but utterly without individuality. Among his men acquaintances, I suppose he passes for the real thing, but I am very much afraid that our little girl will not be happy with him," and Kerle sighed heavily.

"But they are husband and wife until death," reminded the Professor.

"Too true, unfortunately, I tell you, Professor. I think I will run up to New York. There are some lectures I want to attend, and there will certainly be no harm in my calling at the Clayton mansion," and the broad shoulders were thrown back.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE QUICK OF COMMAND.

"I want to speak a moment with you, Love."

Stephen's voice was cold, his manner uninviting, but Love turned with a bright smile upon her face.

"What is it, dear?" she asked, going back to him as he sat in his smoking room, and laying her hand on his arm.

Some of his sternness relaxed at her touch, then he remembered, and he replied coldly:

"Just sit down and I'll tell you."

Love missed the easy courtesy which had animated even her absent-minded old father. He might forget that his glasses were on his nose, but never that his daughter or any lady was standing. With a sudden burning sensation about her eyelids, she seated herself, and waited.

Love was a bride of nearly eight months, but her face was not a happy one. In those glorious violet eyes were shadows, and a nameless something quivered on her exquisite lips. Before her sat the man who had wrecked her so utterly away from the man to whom she had been betrothed.

"I am seriously displeased with you," Stephen said quietly.

"I am sorry." Love replied gently.

"Now listen, dear, and let me tell you why."

Love sat, her little hands folded, the wedding ring looking far too heavy for the white finger.

"When we came here, I was astonished to find you seemed to take so little interest in this house, in the people whom I introduced you, but when I discover that you insult my friends I feel it my duty to speak seriously to you."

The wife looked up. How childish were the features! How gentle the expression! "Surely, husband, you do not know what you say."

Stephen frowned:

"Another thing, Love, as I have told you so often, you must not call me husband in that silly Southern custom. In public call me Mr. Clayton, in private Stephen or Steve, but nowhere husband."

Love could remember stately dames, moving about their memory-haunted homes, saying the word with loving reverence, but she felt nothing. Northern ways are not those of the South, so she simply waited, as she had been forced to do for so long, now that she was a married woman.

"As to knowing what I say, I think I always do that. I say that you have insulted Dahlia Rathborn."

"Impossible!" cried the astonished little wife.

"You have. She is one of my warmest friends. I honor her deeply. Until you came here, Love, she has been happy and universally respected, but now I am told that you called her black."

"I? I insult any one that way? My dear Stephen, believe me, I would never do such a thing."

"But you did, and I heard you," he said sharply, and then repeated the conversation between the two when the Indian Princess and Love Clayton met.

"But listen, Stephen, how could I have any malice in my heart against her? I did not know her, and had not taken sufficient notice of her to see that blood from another race runs in her veins. I am a Southerner, and to me any mixed blood is something horrible, but I would never have made the speech I did had I known the truth."

"Then you regard her Indian blood as a disadvantage?" the husband cried.

Love looked up into his face bravely, as she answered so tenderly:

"I will be honest with you, dear. If I were Love Fanchon I would, but having learned so many new things at Love Clayton, and as she is your friend, I tell you that our friends must be the same, and that I will never think of the matter again if I can help it. Still, dear one, I never have shown by word or act disagreement to her, I hope my breeding is too great for that."

Stephen looked down at her lovely face, saw her clinging hands, and having rebuked her sufficiently, he caught her in his arms and kissed her again and again, asking passionately:

"Who is your master, little one, who, I say? Who is the only person I regard precious one? You little scamp to twine yourself about my heart as you have done! To whom do you belong, eh?"

Love suffered the caresses, but did not return them. Her heart was very heavy. She was lonely, homesick and weary. Only a child in years, she was forced to be a woman, and to so guard her speech as to offend none and yet to charm all.

"Tell me, husband," cried, holding her off and looking down at the young face, which flushed beautifully, "who owns you?" rose now.

Raising her eyes, she replied very gently, yet with a slight warning in her tones, which he did not understand:

"To you, Stephen, to whom else could I belong? My body and my soul were given into your keeping when I married you. Be good and kind to me, for I am so alone except for you. Still, when you were given to you, my soul can be withdrawn."

Stephen laughed lightly:

"Not angry, old girl!" he asked, as he sought to fathom the meaning of her eyes.

"Not angry, but sadly puzzled, husband mine; oh, let me call you that when we are alone, and a big ef you to be good to me and treat me a little more kindly. I have never been accustomed to force," and her lips were quivering, and tears began to come up into her eyes.

"Why, your little darling," he said, gathering her up in his arms, and pressing his cheek to hers, "of course I'll be kind to my girl. Now, don't cry, and we'll be good friends again," he continued, not knowing that by not understanding her, he was forcing the door of his heart shut against him.

"I am not crying," she murmured quietly, slipping to the floor, "and now I must dress for a shopping jaunt with Mrs. Grayson."

"You get along all right with her, don't you?" he asked. Mrs. Grayson was a woman who cared little for any but friends of long standing, and yet Love had made a great conquest in her.

"I love her," was the quiet reply.

"Act to the others just as you do to her and me, and you'll be the success of the season. Just be yourself, that's the secret," and he patted her head.

"But, Stephen, I cannot admit strangers into my heart. People are always strangers to me, you see?" then before he could say anything, she continued:

"Mrs. Grayson comes here to lunch with me, and we will then join Mrs. Guilder, Miss Rathborn, and several others at the Madison Square Gardens."

Stephen looked pleased, and then said suddenly:

"I say, Love, arrange for a dinner, soon. I want to do something for Weymouth and that sort of his, the one you met yesterday, just outside the club."

"Very well, tell me whom you want invited and I will have the matter attended to," Love replied. She was used to these commands.

"What did you think of the boy?" the man asked, suddenly feeling a twinge of jealousy, as he remembered the handsome freshness of Reginald Weymouth, and the fact that he was at least two years older than the girl he himself had for his wife.

"I do not remember," she answered. "The sun was shining in my eyes, and I was thinking of something Mrs. Grayson was talking about, so I only remember talking with a nice appearing young fellow. Not Mr. Weymouth's sort."

"Let us, and a nice fellow, too. We'll do something for him," Stephen said, his unpleasant feeling dispelled, then kissing his wife, he left her, and she went to dress, neither of them realizing what a few hours were to bring forth, nor in what esteem they were to hold Reginald Weymouth, the next time they met, for this was the very day upon which the young fellow was to escape Love, and to lie limp and seemingly lifeless in the swollen of the ring.

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...Or...
THE MYSTERY OF TWIN PEAKS.

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CHAPTER VIII.

The rope by which I was suspended to the tree rested easily around my arms just above my elbows. It was a large rope and my coat was thick, so there was little pain in the hanging. The noose, as near as I could tell, was knotted in the middle of my back, so there was no possibility of my reaching it. All I could do was to swing idly back and forth, kicking my legs, and wait for my captors to reveal themselves.

I heard whispered words and smothered laughter from the branches of the tree three above my head, and then there was the scuffling sound of men coming down the trunk. It was so dark that I could not distinguish the features of the three men who soon stood at my side, but I knew without being told that I had fallen into the power of the two "poor parents" and the man I had caught in the piano box.

They had not spoken, but when the taller of the three men came within reach of me I could see that it was Colonel John Smith.

My anger flamed up at the sight of the man and I kicked him in the stomach.

He grunted and doubled up, from the pain, while the impulse sent me swinging around and around.

The colonel swore a great oath and I could see the gleaming of a steel blade as he sprang toward me.

In hisrage he was about to stab me with a knife.

I was still spinning, however, and he missed me at the first stroke, though I could feel the blade cut through my coat clothing.

I kicked him again on the elbow, and the knife went spinning twenty feet away.

"Don't kill him, Colonel," said Jimmie Jones. "To h—ll with him. Let him stay there for a while, and let's be about our business. The auto ought to be here soon. He was dead before morning."

"It isn't safe to keep him here," said another voice, which I recognized as belonging to the fellow who had been hidden in the piano box in my house.

"I'd like to cut his tongue out, Pete," said the Colonel, rubbing his elbow.

"This is no public a place to leave him. Some one might pass along the road," spoke up Jimmie Jones. "Let's gag him and tie him up good and hide him in the thick timber on the mountain side."

"I'm in favor of killing him. He kicked me, I tell you," said the Colonel. "Some men tell no tales, and there is no use in taking chances."

They talked a few yards and discussed the question in low tones.

It was only a comfortable five minutes for me. The rope was beginning to cut into my arms, and my fingers tingled and I could feel them swelling rapidly.

Besides the physical pain, it wasn't a pleasant thing to know that my life was hanging by a thread much frailer than the rope that held me. They were deciding my fate. And I was helpless. I knew it would be suicidal to cry out, even if it would be possible to scream, and I seemed to be that high.

I could only wait with what fortitude and courage Heaven gave me.

At last I saw the little group break up and one of the men came toward me.

It was Pete—he of the piano box.

"Now look here, Burton," he said roughly. "We're going to tie you up and hide you in the woods. If you say one word that kicking business your life will pay the forfeit. Do you understand?"

"All right, Pete," I said. "But I'm sorry, now that I didn't give you that thrashing when I had the chance."

"You'd better be glad," he laughed, though he evidently was angry underneath.

They cut me down and tied my hands behind my back. I made no protest and no resistance.

"Now, we've fooled around here long enough," said Colonel John Smith, as the other fellows are waiting for me at the foot of the wooded slope. Jimmie, you lead him off into the thick woods and tie him to a tree, somewhere."

"Say, I'm not," protested Jimmie.

"No matter. Take him away, Pete. When you get rid of him you join us and we'll go to the house. Let there you will find us at the stone house. I'd send Jimmie with you, only we need him to help carry the ladder and the tools up the hill."

"Well, I want to get there before the fun," said Pete.

"Oh, you'll have plenty of time. We'll probably have to blow up one side of the house before we can get in. I've got dynamite enough to blow up the d—d mountain, if necessary," he chuckled.

These fiendish words made my blood run cold.

I began to see all the details of their horrible plan.

They would scale the iron spike-topped fence with the ladder. Then they would blow up the house, and the inmates would be at their mercy.

Whether they would slaughter Margaret in cold blood, or whether they would carry her away for some more dreadful fate, I could not even guess.

"Oh, men—if you be men and not devils from the infernal regions—think of what you are about to do," I cried. "If you have any feud with Mr. Chumley take your vengeance out upon him and spare the innocent, lovely and unprotected girl who has never done you any harm."

Colonel Smith uttered his sardonic laugh.

"The man is beyond our reach," he said. "We can only strike him through the one person in all the world that he loves. His daughter is Colonel Fortune's idol. He laughed at us. But now the time has come when he will weep and grind his teeth."

"You fiend!" I cried.

He laughed again.

"You seem mightily interested in the girl. Maybe you love her," he said.

A fiendish words seemed to be wrung from my tortured soul.

He laughed again.

"She is not for you, my boy. I'm sorry to interfere with your plans, but you have chosen the wrong side. Pete's a comic fellow, and you also must suffer. I say, Margaret Chumley is for me. She will become the bride of death and hell and destruction before many hours have passed away."

"You lie!" I shouted, but the gag did not permit it!"

"Take him away," cried the Colonel savagely. "We have had enough of this nonsense. The others are waiting."

They started off and waited in my mouth so that I could no longer speak or cry out. The Colonel's last information came as a shock. Margaret wanted to kill you outright, and Jimmie voted in favor of sparing your life. He was not wanting to shed any more blood than necessary, and so he voted for life."

"I'll be the Colonel's feud," he went on, "and not mine, and not Jimmie's. We are bound to that purpose forever. What he says for us to do we must do."

I put my face against his sleeve and muttered incoherently, which he seemed to understand.

"You want the gag removed, poor fellow? Is there something you want to say to me?"

I gasped and nodded my head emphatically.

Some pity seemed to be stirring within him.

"Will you promise to make no outcry, if I listen to you? Nod if I will do it. After all, what does it matter."

He removed the handkerchief from my mouth.

"Now say what you must say, and don't waste words. I'm sorry to have to use force longer than necessary."

"Pete, you are a gentleman," I said. "Pete, you are not a bad fellow, I believe, but you have fallen into the hands of a bad man. It is not too late, however, to turn your hand on the side of right and justice—"

"Stop that rot," he said. "It is too late. You are wasting your breath. The feud between the Colonel and Mr. Chumley is world-wide. It began twenty years ago, and may be full of Eastern mysticism and oriental revenge. It concerns me not. All that it concerns more than that. It is rivalry between two men.

"They both loved the same woman, and Chumley won. They both went after the same gigantic fortune, and Chumley got the money. By an oath, they are blood-brothers and the tribe of the Colonel, on account of his mighty hatred, is a rebel and an outlaw. Jimmie and I and three others are in his vassals. You do not understand all of this, and it is not necessary for you to know the meaning of it. But it is a warfare of men skilled in powers of which you have no knowledge. It can only end with the death of the Colonel—whose name is not Smith—or with the destruction of Margaret Chumley, which would hurt her father more than death.

"If this incarnate fiend, Smith, was dead, then, you would be free from your oath, and Margaret Chumley would be safe?"

"Yes, that is right," he admitted.

"Then release me, and let me go and kill him."

He laughed derisively.

"I am not rich, Pete, but I can rake together fifteen thousand dollars which I will give you, if you will do this."

He shook his head.

"That does not appeal to me."

"But Chumley is rich," I urged. "He has millions. I pledge my life that he will heap a princely fortune upon your head if you will help to save his daughter."

He was now moving in the depth of the woods, and were standing beneath a giant oak.

Pete paused and stood near me.

"All the riches of the world would not tempt me," he said, slowly. "I am a man accursed, and under a spell. Of what use is money to me. The end will soon come—the end of this life—for me. And in the next life I will be free from this fell bondage. But I have said that I would help you, and there is no turning back. I must carry it through to the end."

"I should think you would be afraid to face the future like with your sins hot upon your heart," I cried.

"You do not know," he said, slowly. "And I cannot explain. But I repeat that I would help you—and I would help her—if I could. But I cannot. The end must come. I cannot. The hand of fate lies heavy upon me. I have a premonition of the end. I must have it soon, or quickly. I am weary of the burdens of time."

"But you now really have a mother?" I exclaimed, hoping to soften his heart, somewhat.

"Why will you try to touch me?" he cried. "I tell you that I am fulfilling destiny. I am only a tool in the hands of fate. I am paying the punishment of my past sins. Don't torture me."

"You are crazy," I said. "That is what's the matter with you. You have fallen into the power of some fellow to thread. Then he turned toward the foot of the stone steps that led to the top of the peak, and I heard the footsteps of one of the disciples.

I tugged at the bonds that held my hands behind me. They were cutting my wrists, but the rope held.

Torture and my helplessness, my soul cried out in a prayer to Heaven for mercy, and then my mind seemed to give way, and all was a blank.

CHAPTER X.

Many strange things happened on that eventful night, when I was entrapped at the foot of the peak, and was bound, but I was not conscious in the deep woods at the base of Twin Peaks.

Some of these strange events I learned afterward from others, but I will relate them here in their proper order.

My old Semiramis, daughter of the black African queen, was also busy during that night. You will remember that she said, "Burton, you will sleep deep now, and in that clan etw tree," but in my blindness and folly I had paid no heed to her.

After I had left the house Semiramis had sat in her kitchen, smoking her pipe. She fell into a deep study, and her mind began to work in vision.

She seemed that Mr. Chumley stood before her, and that his contour and appearance were so natural that she was not astonished. He began to speak, and my daughter's comfort is in trouble. Come," said he.

"Yes," said Chumley, I'm comin'," said she.

He moved toward the door and she followed him.

He walked, or glided, noiselessly and entirely without effort, down the steps to the road and thence out into the street.

The night was dark and the night was growing late, and in a little time they came to the big elm tree by the spring.

Then Mr. Chumley turned and came in a direct line to the oak tree where I was tied.

"Release him," said Mr. Chumley, and while the black woman was bending over me I awoke from my stupor.

In a minute I was free and on my feet. She took the gag out of my mouth.

"You blessed old woman!" I exclaimed. "How did you find me?"

"Mars' Chumley brought me. There he stands."

I looked in the direction she pointed, but I could see nothing. I thought that my eyes deceived me in the dark.

"Chumley," I cried. "Thank Heaven you have come! I hope we shall be in time. They have taken a ladder to scale the iron fence. They mean to blow up the stone house with dynamite."

There was no response.

I ran here and there among the trees.

"Chumley, where are you?" I cried.

"There, there, can't you see him?" exclaimed Semiramis.

"He is not here. You have been dreaming, woman," said I.

"Den it was a ghost," she said, her voice trembling. "It was a ghost. I do not see him no more. He led me here, an' now he's gone."

"There are no ghosts," said I, incredulously. "It was a dream. But it matter. It was a lucky dream, and I pray to Heaven it came to you in time. Let us go."

I ran to my house, and the old woman followed more slowly.

As soon as I was indoors I ran to the telephone and called up the stone house.

"Miss Chumley—Margaret," I cried. "Is this you?"

"Yes, Mr. Graeme, it is I," came over the wire.

"You are threatened with danger," I exclaimed. "I am coming at once with help. See that the gate is locked, and that all the iron shutters to the windows are barred."

"It is done," said she. "John Henry did that before he went away."

"Is John Hedry gone? How did that happen?"

"They are all gone, Mr. Graeme. I am at the house alone."

"Great heavens," I cried. "Then take care of yourself till I come. When I fire my revolver twice at the gate, you must come and open it for me. Then we will hold the house against all odds until further help comes. May God protect you, Margaret."

I learned afterward how it came that the others were all away from the house at night. It was through the treachery of the French girl, who had been that day in communication with the gambler Jones—or else was acting in pursuance of a plan previously arranged.

That night shortly before dark she said:

"I have bought a bonnet—oh, a beautiful bonnet—at the store yesterday that I have it ready tonight. I must go and get it."

"But you will come back," suggested Margaret.

"Ah, mademoiselle—the lovely hat. How can I wait? Besides it is so hot to climb the hill when the sun is out. I must go today—this afternoon—and get my hat. I have asked her. We will be back at once."

As she was gone so long Margaret reasoned that life in the stone house was dull for the two, perhaps, and their womenfolk, and she could not refuse so slight a request. Besides she was not afraid, and though she was alone in the house during the rest of the day before, she thought that Mrs. Warren Trent, trusty soul, and the dog would be back almost before the last bit of autumn daylight faded from the top of Twin Peaks.

As for Semiramis, she was gone. He and his brother had gone for the night to stay with a sick relative.

Fate had played hand in hand with the plotters.

As events turned out, nothing could have happened better for us, but at that moment, when I heard Margaret's voice so alone and threatened by a half-dozen unscrupulous villains, I was almost crazed. I did not wait to hear details.

I called the village marshal on the telephone.

He had already gone to bed, but there was a fire at his home.

"Hello, Burton," I called. "A band of desperadoes are preparing to attack the stone house on the top of Twin Peaks' The attacks are all gone, and Miss Chumley is there alone. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said he.

"I am going there at once, Burton. I will be at the top of the hill in ten minutes. I will fire my revolver twice. Then you must get there with help. Bring as many men as you can get hold of, and for heaven's sake hurry."

"I'll be there in half an hour," said he.

"Half an hour—why, when I was startled," said I. "telephone to me as you value the life of my house. There's a wire there. Then I will tell you how the land lies. And hurry, hurry! Good-bye."

I arranged the women revolver around my waist. I took plenty of cartridges for the weapon, and then started on a rapid walk across the valley and up the slopes to the beleaguered stone house.

CHAPTER XI.

I was breathless when I neared the gate, and I went more quietly.

I expected to find the enemy ahead of me, but at first no one appeared to have delayed. They had decided for safety's sake to attack in the twilight. I saw that a ragged path around the mountain to climb the peak from the other side. They had gone that way because they had to carry the ladder and the explosives with which they meant to blow up the house.

Margaret had seen them approach. Almost at the gate I heard the sound of some one up the steps.

I did not wait for me to fire my revolver to give the alarm, but came running down the walk to meet me.

In another instant she had opened the gate and I was inside.

"Come with me to the back of the house," she whispered. "They have put a ladder up to the fence and are preparing to climb over."

"Let us escape, then," said I. "Come with me."

It looked as though we were going to get off luckily. We turned to go out at the gate. I thought we would run for it and get to the village before they could catch up with us.

But destiny had ordained otherwise.

On the back of the fence the hill sloped rapidly and perhaps their ladder was too short to reach the top of the iron spiked palings. At any rate, Colonel John Smith and his band of assassins had changed their minds.

They had decided to make the attack from the front of the house.

Just as Margaret and I opened the gate to step outside, they came creeping as silent as so many Indians around the curving fence. They were not twenty feet away from us.

In the dim light I could see them indistinctly.

Two of them carried the ladder.

A third bore in his arms a package—no doubt the explosives.

Three of them carried over their shoulders some sort of guns.

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It seemed that they had come prepared for all emergencies.

I had a wild idea that by firing a bullet into the package of dynamite I might cause it to explode and blow them all into eternity.

But there was the possibility that in the darkness I might miss. I did not dare to open a single-handed battle against them, for I knew they were desperate men and not cowards. I could not hope to kill them all.

I would only expose Margaret and myself to their fire. She might be wounded, and even if she escaped, if anything happened to me she would be defenseless and at their mercy.

The only thing we could do was to retreat to the house, and shut ourselves in and try to hold the place until the marshal came with his posse to our rescue.

I knew that Burton would shirk no danger and that I could depend upon him to the death.

I had no doubt we should be able to hold the enemy off until help arrived.

They had not yet seen us on account of the shadow of the gate beside which we stood.

"We must go back to the house," I whispered. "Come."

I took hold of Margaret's dear hand and we ran silently toward the front door.

We had covered half the distance before Colonel John Smith's gang saw us.

"Halt, or I fire," called a stern voice, which I recognized as that of the Colonel himself.

For answer we ran rapidly.

A bullet sped between us and I heard it flatten against the side of the house.

"Halt," repeated the voice.

We were at the door, now, and the enemy was at the gate.

"Don't fire again. You will alarm the town," exclaimed Jimmie Jones. "We will have them blown out of the house within five minutes. Let them go in if they want to. They will be helpless."

We opened the door and entered, and ran to the top story—which had been furnished for Mr. Chumley's study.

The return fire was prompt and accurate. A bullet struck me in the fore-arm, crushing the bone.

My pistol fell to the ground, and my helpless fingers dangled across the window sill.

With an involuntary cry of pain I reeled back into the room, and Margaret caught me in her arm. But I would not faint. I could bear the pain like a stoic, but I must not lose possession of my faculties.

"Oh, the poor dear arm!" she half sobbed.

Instantly she had a cloth in her hand. She bandaged the arm tightly and deftly.

"The poor, dear arm," she said, again and again. At that minute I was happy, even in the danger that threatened us.

I forgot the pain of my wound in the caressing tenderness of Margaret's voice.

"It is nothing—the wound is nothing," I said. "But it is much that you care," I whispered.

With my uninjured hand I felt for her fingers and clasped them.

"How can I save you for your father?" I asked in dismay.

As if in answer to this question a voice came through the window.

"Hello, there."

"Well?" I answered, standing back beyond the reach of any stray shot.

"If you will surrender, Graeme, you may go. We have punished you enough."

"And Miss Chumley?" I asked.

"She must come with us," said Smith, in a stern voice. "You cannot save her. We have laid the dynamite at your door. In three minutes we will blow open this side of the house. I say, nothing can save her."

"Then I will share her fate," said I.

"As you like," he replied indifferently.

I went to the window and looked out.

I could see the stick of dynamite lying against the base of the door.

Jimmie Jones struck a match against the stone wall and in another second I could see the splintering of the long fuse, and the spitting flame slowly ate its way toward the dynamite.

"You have three minutes in which to say your prayers," shouted the voice of Colonel Smith. "Come on," he added, turning to the others, "we will go to the fence on the other side of the house. And bring the rest of the dynamite with you. There is enough of it to blow the whole top of the hill off."

"It was foolish to bring so much," said Jimmie, as he hastily picked up the package.

"How could I tell how much we might need," grumbled the other, as they all walked hastily around the house.

"Two minutes and a half!" shouted Colonel Smith, and I could feel the dear girl beside me.

"We will go together," she said, the love-light shining in her eyes.

I threw my left arm around her waist, she pillowed her head upon my shoulder and turned her face to mine. Without words we sealed our betrothal with a kiss.

"Two minutes," shouted the fiendish voice of Colonel Smith, and I could hear his fellow ruffians laugh.

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"Release Him?"

It was a round room, with windows on all sides, and formed an admirable fort.

I opened the shutter of the window facing the front and looked out. The men already had clambered over the gate and were rushing up the path toward the house.

"Back, dogs, at your peril," I cried, firing my revolver into the midst of them.

I saw a man fall to his knees with a groan.

They paused an instant and I fired again.

My arm was out of the window, but I sheltered my body behind the casing.

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HOW RATS SAVED HIS LIFE.

BY ARTHUR L. MESERVE.

"Rats desert a sinking ship," said Ben Haley, the old sailor, as he took in a quid of tobacco, and gave the waistbands of his trousers an energetic hitch.

"An old saying," said I, "and one that has no more truth in it than hundreds of others of a similar sort."

Old Ben stared at me with distended eyes, as though he doubted my sanity, or thought that I was quizzing him.

"It is the gospel truth," he said solemnly. "That rats leave a ship when it is about to sink?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I have seen it do it with my own eyes."

"And the ship was lost?"

"Yes, on the first voyage it made."

"How came you to see them?"

"I'll spin you the yarn, if you want to hear it. My story is about my life. If I hadn't, I should have been in Davy Jones' locker long since."

I told Ben that nothing would please me better than to hear the story, as long as he vouched for its truthfulness. So, giving his trousers another hitch, he began:

"You see, Bill Hardy and I was a young man. I was courting my old woman in those days, and we plotted on my twenty-sixth birthday. This was the year before, so I was twenty-five at the time the thing happened. We was engaged one day about.

"I had been lying in port for nigh about six months. I wasn't very well when I came ashore, and afore I got back I was down with Shanghai fever, and she took possession of my heart afore I knew it. I was dead in love with her in no time, and after that, as though I got strong again, I couldn't tear myself away. So I hung around until I became ashamed of myself, and made up my mind that I would ship on the first vessel that came along, and say no more about it.

"In just two days after I had made up my mind, a ship came into port. She was a whaler, bound on 'a three years' voyage, and was lacking a few men. She was a good vessel, and I didn't like the looks of her very well; but I had been lying on my ears so long that I hadn't a shot in the locker, and was glad of any chance.

"One of the mates came ashore, and I fell in with him. He found out that I wanted to ship, and he tried his best to get me to go on board and sign the papers at once. But I held back. Three years seemed a long time to wait for Susie, even if somehow I didn't step in and cut me out. She hadn't promised them to me, but somehow I felt sure that I should get her if I worked hard for the prize.

"I told the mate that I would let him know the next day, and so got away from him. That night I went to see Susie, and told her that I had made up my mind to ship. She said that she was glad of it, for I had been loafing around long enough. Her tongue said so, but her eyes told me another story when she knew how long it would be before the North Star would furl her sails again in our port. Three years is a good while to look forward to, but sometimes they go by almost afore you know it.

"The moon was shining bright over the town, and somewhat late in the evening I asked Susie to go down to the wharves and take a look at the North Star with me. So she clapped on her bonnet, and off we started.

"We hadn't a great distance to go, but we were some time in getting there. We had a good deal to say, and weren't in any hurry. But we got to the wharf where she was lying at last, and stepped in the shadow of a warehouse to look at her. In the moonlight she looked a fine craft, I said to Susie, although I didn't mean more than half my words.

"'Ain't she a beauty? It won't be a bad home for a fellow for three years, will it?'

"'She looks well enough, Ben, but it is a great while to be gone.'

"'I know it, Susie,' said I, giving her a hug, 'but a sailor can't stay always on shore.'

"'You are right, Ben,' she answered bravely. 'Of course you have to go.'

"She didn't speak again for a minute, and I had an idea that she was going to burst out crying.

"Her face was turned toward the ship, which lay as still and silent as though there was not a living thing on board. Then Susie gave a great start, and a cry at the same moment.

"'Ben! Ben! you must not go in that ship! If you do, you will never come back.'

"'Why, Susie, what do you mean?' said I, amazed.

"'Look yonder, and tell me if I ain't right.'

"She pointed to the plank which led from the gangway to the wharf. The moonlight fell upon it, and I saw at once what the matter was. The rats were leaving the ship! Over the plank they scampered, and then down through a hole in the wharf to join the hordes of their race that dwelt there.

"Susie looked up into my eyes with a face as white as the moonlight.

"'Rats always leave a doomed ship,' she said. 'All the old sailors say so.' Depend upon it, the North Star will never come back. How lucky it was, Ben, that we came down here tonight.'

"'So it was, Susie,' said I, with a shiver. 'The North Star will go without me. I will wait for another vessel.'

"We stood still and watched the rats as they scampered out. It did seem as though there could be no end to them. But there was at last, and then I knew that you might hunt the North Star from stem to stern and not find one left behind.

"Susie and I went home, and before I left her that night she had promised to be my wife.

"I told the mate next day that I had changed my mind, but I did not tell him why I had done so.

"The North Star sailed away on her voyage, but she never came back. What became of her no one knows to this day.

"In about a week I got another vessel, and went on a short voyage. When I came back, Susie met me at her parents' house as man and wife.

"Rats, mates, the rats they saved my life. If they hadn't left the North Star just as they did, I should have gone down with her, and you would never have heard this story."

The Difference.

"Does Miss Skweller sing?"

"She renders vocal pieces, however."

"And pray what's the difference between singing and rendering?"

"Singing is sometimes very pleasing to the ear."

Tough Luck

Bifkins—Poor Chapleigh is up against a job lot of tough luck.

Mifkins—How's that?

Bifkins—He married for money only to discover later that his wife hadn't a dollar, and now she refuses to take in washing to support him.

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Some feminine complexions are complete affairs.

Trains of thought have many head-on collisions.

Too many friends in need will keep an easy man broke.

Diamond earrings might be properly classed as sidelights.

A man isn't necessarily an artist because he draws the color line.

Some people take things as they come and others grab them as they go.

If a man is well and happy he ought to be willing to let it go at that.

Beware of the chronic hand-shaker; he is apt to develop into a leg-puller later.

If life is a burden to you it's a safe bet that you are a burden to your neighbors.

Some people display the best taste by cutting out originality from their conversation.

A bachelor says that if he had to choose between two evils he would marry the one with the most money.

Most of us know when we have said enough, but few of us have sufficient self-control to put the lid on.

Now that Hearst is defeated, Wall street would be pleased to see the suckers regain confidence and come back.

A woman of more or less experience says it is easier to boss half a dozen men than it is to control one baby.

Occasionally a woman dyes her hair red, but if a man was to do a thing like that he would be confined to a padded cell.

What San Francisco needs now is a moral earthquake that will shake its boodlers' bones from their grip and into the penitentiary.

When Count Boni sent word to his wife that he was dying because of her action he may have supposed that he might as well be dead as penniless.

Emperor William cheers for Roosevelt as if he enjoyed it. Those two virile gentlemen could have a lot of fun by getting together and swapping yarns.

Some men seem to think they can purchase a mansion in the skies on the installment plan, so they drop a penny into the contribution plate every Sunday.

Having agreed to pay the Duke of Marlborough $150,000 a year to get rid of him, the American duchess, nee Vanderbilt, is left free to enjoy her title without the drawback of the man she got with it.

J. Pierpont Morgan has collected manuscripts and private letters of Bobbie Burns at a cost of $200,000. Mr. Morgan, being quite satisfied with himself, evidently does not realize that were Bobbie Burns alive today one of his chief delights would be to have fun with Mr. Morgan and his kind.

THE STOLEN MILLIONS;

THE BANK PRESIDENT'S CRIME.

By MAJOR ALBION F. GRANT, author of "The Deuce of Diamonds," etc.

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CHAPTER XIII.

BY THE SUNSET BAY.

Beneath the sunny skies of July Saint Pentland thought to find ease and rest after his long flight across an ocean and a continent.

But for the guilty there is no real rest. There is ever before him, if he be a man with a conscience, the work of his evil hands and a longing for the brighter days which he has darkened forever by his crimes.

Pentland and the adventuress arrived in Naples and were driven along the bay to one of the most fashionable hotels.

There he hoped for seclusion. So did not know what had become of Lorraine, for that worthy after quitting the train so suddenly had returned to Paris as we have seen Pentland hoped that his companion in crime would rejoin him and he promised to stand between the cashier and Sylvia Sharp.

The woman who had accompanied him in his flight was his real nemesis, dragging him down and down, lower and lower to the depths of perdition. Yet he dared not shake her.

It was one night after the arrival in Naples when the pair were strolling along the bay that Pentland and Sylvia met each other. That particular part of the esplanade was well filled with benches occupied by people to whom the heat of there were to be found the rich and poor, the bravo and the beggar.

Sylvia, who was admiring the gorgeous sunset which had suddenly burst and sky, for a moment did not see the quick start of her companion.

Pentland turned white at the gills and would have retraced his steps when the voice of the adventuress fell upon his ear.

"It is simply grand!" she exclaimed. "There can never be anything like that in America. We have our sunsets, but here the waning god of day is at best and the whole world for a moment, as it were, becomes a paradise."

Pentland did not speak.

"Why are you silent, my dear?" cried Sylvia. "Look at the gorgeous light on the bay! Is it not beautiful? It is magnificent!"

Just then a flower girl forced her way to Sylvia's side and offered her wares.

The haughty beauty took some flowers from the basket and offered a gold coin in payment.

The black eyes of the fair Italian dilated at a sight of the gold.

"It is bright," said she, looking up into Sylvia's face, "but not all that glitters."

The siren laughed.

"What if there were? You would take it just the same."

"Come," put in Pentland, impatiently. "Let us get away from here."

"Not yet. This young thing is so pretty that I would question her."

"Let her go, I say. Over yonder is the girl who spoke good God's vengeance in the garden."

Sylvia turned from the flower girl with a little start.

"Where?" she cried.

"Over there on that bench against the column. I am sure of it. And see! she is covertly watching us."

Sylvia's eyes caught sight of the person designated by Pentland and the next moment she was pacing thither with her lips compressed and fire in her eyes.

Pentland stood like one senseless.

As the adventuress reached the bench a young girl rose and faced her.

"So you are spying upon us!" she exclaimed. "You have dogged the footsteps of my friend and myself. Know you not there are officers in Naples?"

For a moment there was no answer, the girl, who was Marguerite, looking into Sylvia's face with a defiant flash and apparently wondering how she could best pierce this woman's armor.

"Who are you?" she suddenly demanded. "I am Mrs. Pentland, my husband—"

At this Margery laughed and looked toward Pentland, who was making rings on the ground with his cane.

"Prisons in Naples? So there are," said Margery. "Perhaps you would rather than I may see their interior."

At this the face of Sylvia Sharp turned from white to red and she raised her parasol menacingly.

Margery drew back a little and looked her calmly in the eye.

"Put that down, perhaps—"

She hesitated, for a hand was laid on her arm and she was pulled back.

The person who had caught her arm was veiled, but her figure was superb and Margery obeyed her.

"Let us go. We have seen enough," said the stranger one through the veil.

"Follow us again and the law will strike deeper than you think," cried Sylvia, and the next moment she had turned back toward her victim.

"Well?" said Pentland.

"She was some chit that wanted to make a little money by blackmail or something of the kind."

"You did not recognize her?"

"I did not and she would not disclose her identity."

"I thought another person came upon the scene."

"There did and she pulled the chit away. But for that I would have written my autograph on her face with my parasol."

Pentland was anxious to get away from the spot. It had no charms for him and the sunset was a thing of the past. So though the soft shades of an Italian evening they repaired to a swell cafe and found a secluded corner.

There under the influence of wine Pentland's heart came back to him and under the spell of the bright eyes of Sylvia Sharp he got many things of the recent past.

"We shall quit this city tomorrow," said he.

"What! before we have seen it? We haven't looked into the Vesuvius crater yet—"

"To perdition with the crater," snapped Pentland. "I want to get away from that girl."

At this Sylvia leaned back and laughed till the wine spilled over the rim of the glass she held and stained.

"Just leave all such creatures to me and all will be well," she exclaimed. "I know how to handle such impertinences. I will have her clapped into prison if she shows up again and—"

"And expose the whole thing, our identity and all—"

"Leave it to me, I say."

"What was the second woman like?"

"I did not see her face," said Sylvia. "She wore a veil—"

"My God!"

"Who do you think she was?" asked the American adventuress."

"I've no idea—"

"Your—"

The rest of the sentence did not fall from the woman's lips.

"Curse it!" and Pentland turned round and looked over the merry scene in the cafe. "Let us go. This air is positively stifling. I—I—I—" But he could not tell me all. I knew of her crossing the ocean. She was in Paris, London, too. I will see that she doesn't trouble us. I will take care of this meeting of chance. This is Italy and they do things here."

"What do you mean?" cried Pentland.

"Never mind. The points of stilettos are as sharp as a needle's in this land."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOUSE OF THE TERROR.

Clyde Pentland sat at her window in one of the prominent hotels of Naples overlooking the wonderful bay.

Margery had been gone some time and was expecting every hour the return of Lorraine. Clyde had no inclination to attend the play of the fashionable world, but seized the opportunity to see one of the finest plays ever produced in Naples.

The hour for getting late and she had been alone for some time.

Presently there came down the hall beyond the door, the well-known footsteps of the ball-boy, and his little rap startled Clyde to her feet.

The boy handed her a sealed note.

Instantly it was thought of and the American girl read as follows:

"Margery Lorraine taken very ill. We have met with a little accident and wish you would come. I give the address where we will be found. Send the carriage at once to the place. In great haste.

"LILY."

"Where is the cabriolet?" cried Clyde, as she hastened to seize her hat.

"You will find one at the door," said the boy.

In an instant she was out of the room with the note crumpled in her hand.

Her eyes were keen, however, blinded by the lights in front of the hotel and she stepped upon the pavement hardly knowing where she was.

The directions written at the bottom of the note were familiar to the young girl's daughter, but she relied on the knowledge of the driver of the vehicle which the bell-boy rattled out.

Clyde handed the paper up to the man on the box and he read it at once and nodded.

"As fast as you can go," said Clyde as she took a seat in the peculiar vehicle.

"You cannot get me to the place too soon."

In a moment she was bowling over the narrow streets of Naples. The lights flashed rapidly behind her and the darkness ahead seeming to swallow her up.

The ride seemed endless. But at last it ended and Clyde looked out.

She saw that she was in well-to-do houses all of the same style and wondered in which one her friends were.

The vehicle was pulled to the gutter and the man got down. He assisted Clyde to alight.

"Tant one, signorina," said he as he took his fare and pointed to a certain house in the row.

Clyde went up the steps, but did not notice that the cabriolet moved away at the same time.

She pulled the bell of the door, heard a musical ring inside and the portal opened.

She was ushered into a darkened hall and caught sight of one of her own sex who took her hand and held it firmly.

"Where are my friends?" eagerly asked the American girl. "I have been summoned here by a note from one of them. They have met with an accident?"

"Yes," was the reply. "With an accident, poor things. They are on the next floor."

Clyde followed the woman up a flight of broad stairs and found herself in a hall.

"This way," said her guide.

Clyde followed and in another moment a door was opened by the woman ahead of her.

"They are in here."

Unsuspectingly the banker's child stepped forward and crossed the threshold.

In another moment she saw she had been entrapped.

There was nothing in the room but a little dresser and a couch, or, more truthfully speaking, a pallet.

A light burned on the dresser revealing the barrenness of the place and Clyde, with face suddenly grown white, whirled upon the person who had conducted her thither.

"What means this?" she demanded. "My friends are not here. Tell me the meaning of this trick."

The sallow-faced woman laughed till the echoes of her cachinnation seemed to freeze Clyde's heart.

"This is good enough for the signorina," said the woman. "This will do for the American lady."

"But what does it mean? What sort of house is this?"

"This is Il Terrore."

"What does that mean?"

"The House of the Terror, if the signorina will have it translated."

"But whose dastardly work is this? Who planned this trap and had it executed?"

"Perhaps the signorina can guess."

Clyde looked at the bit of closed scrap from her face. She remembered the flushing eyes of Sylvia Sharp, on the night while in Paris they gleamed before her, but not from the head of the woman before whom she stood.

"She was not here. She was in Paris. Is it? Oh, the driver kept it. But how came the woman to have planned this to get Lily's name to the notes?"

Just then the woman spoke up:

"The signorina will find the walls of the room incapable of conveying sound," she said. "I am glad you are tired and will be spared outside the chamber. She will notice that the window pointed upon the bay. From its sash overlook the beautiful bay which has no equal in all this world and she can see the dangerous crevasses that are recorded Naples so famous."

"But, but—" cried Clyde, ignoring all this. "Tell me who planned all this trickery. In a house fertile brain was this hellishness hatched? Was it that woman—"

"Time will tell," broke in the Neapolitan. "My lady mistress will know of this place, but she cannot leave it without the consent of the signorina present. The House of the Terror seldom gives up its tenants. They die looking at the beautiful sunsets and the cloud that hangs over Vesuvius."

Clyde nearly gave way to despair. She was in a death-trap and believed that Sylvia Sharp had planned it all.

The banker's daughter thought of fighting her way to freedom, for the door had not been shut upon her, and as she took a quick step forward, she was confronted by a man with a laugh, slammed the door in her face. She was now free.

For a moment she stood silent in the center of the room which was not large, then she went to the window and looked out through iron bars upon the stars and the myriad lights of Naples.

Her hand suddenly fell upon the wall. It was cold and hard and she thought of what her jailer had said about the sound not getting beyond the chamber.

She was in the toils and that by the only decoy that could have caught her.

The banker's daughter stood at the window a few moments and then went over to the pillow upon which she thought she had noticed something.

A bit of paper was pinned to the pillow and Clyde unfastened it and looked.

Going over to the lamp which burned with a sickly light, she bent forward and with a face blanched by the terror of the moment, read as follows:

"Within the House of the Terror. Who enters here leaves hope behind."

The paper fluttered from her hand and she staggered against the wall.

CHAPTER XV.

A DESPERATE PROPOSAL.

Clare Lorraine, the cashier, after his

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interview with Clyde Pentland in Paris, took the train and made his way to Naples.

He knew that the girl would go thither in search of her father and he wanted to be in the same city for purposes peculiarly his own.

The train could not bear him too swiftly to his destination. He wished he could fly. The threats of Sylvia Sharp to hand him over to the authorities to be held until he could be called to account for the death of Oscar Blythe, of which, as we knew, he was innocent, had now no fears for him, for he had resolved to face the adventuress and beat her at her own game.

When he reached Naples, being already informed as to the hotel where Pentland would stop, he made his way thither well disguised and registered under an assumed name.

He waited round for a sight of Pentland, to whom alone for the present he would disclose his identity, but that worthy had gone out driving and might not return for several hours.

He knew nothing about the trick that had been played on Clyde, nor that she was in the House of the Terror at the mercy of some enemy.

Lorraine strolled into a little park near the hotel and sat down for want of something better to do.

Suddenly he became aware that he was not entirely alone in the retreat and upon looking around he discovered that he was being covertly watched by a man whom he did not know.

To be watched so early in Naples put him on his guard and he was about to move away when he was accosted by the stranger.

"I have the pleasure of meeting Mr. Lorraine, I believe—Mr. Lorraine of America," said the stranger.

Lorraine looked at the speaker and stammered that he was not the gentleman named.

"Come," cried the other. "We haven't met for years, but you cannot hide your eyes. I have been a customer at the counter of the Reaper's Bank that was and am quite familiar with your face."

Lorraine saw that it was useless to attempt to keep up his incognito, so he came out boldly.

"What if I am Mr. Lorraine?" he said. "one has at least a right to travel incog in this country."

"Certainly."

"To whom might I be speaking?"

"I am Jacob Stall, late of America, but now of the world at large. Shall we walk over to the Queen's Cafe, Mr. Lorraine?"

Lorraine would have demurred at this invitation, but he was anxious to see the adventure out, so he accompanied the stranger to a little cafe near-by.

When they had seated themselves at the table the other man leaned across and said:

"I think we might as well go in together in this little deal. You have lost some of your respectability from what I have heard and should have no hesitancy in making a little stake."

"I do not understand you," stammered the cashier.

"Well, to be plain and come at once to the fountain head of this matter, how much, think you, the old gentleman carries in the little valise?"

Lorraine started.

"If you mean——"

"Yes, I mean Saul Pentland," put in the other. "I mean the man who looted the Reaper's Bank with your valuable assistance."

Lorraine affected indignation, but he soon discovered that it would not go with Jacob Stall.

"How much has he left? Of course he carries the stolen stuff in that little grip he guards so well."

"I cannot say."

"There must be a cool million left in negotiable bonds and so forth."

"What do you propose?"

"Simply this: To rob the robber."

"What," cried Lorraine, sinking back into the depths of his chair. "You do not think that I——"

"Yes, I do," was the break in. "A man who will forge and coolly rob a bank is just the fellow I'm looking for. He's lost to all honor just as I am—I Jacob Stall at your service. The old gentleman and the charmer are away and I believe the valise is in his room at the hotel."

"But——"

"Mr. Lorraine, perhaps you don't know me. Are you aware that this morning a cablegram reached Naples for your arrest?"

Lorraine whitened.

"It is true. It probably missed you in Paris. At the same time the arrest of Pentland is ordered, but these Italian police are so pig-headed that unless they are put on the trail they will not discover anything for twenty-four hours. You do pretty well masquerading in the colors you now wear, but were the veneer washed off and you stood in your true light you would be easily caught."

"What is it you propose?"

"When they get Pentland they'll get the valise as well," continued Jacob Stall. "That is certain. Now, sir, for us to step in and get it first will be a great coup. We can be out of this stinking city within an hour after doing the job and——"

"But it would be monstrous——"

"Come, don't put on any airs. You are as much of a thief now as when you looted the bank. You will do one of two things, Mr. Lorraine. You will help me do this little job or be under arrest within an hour."

Lorraine whitened to the gills. He wanted to draw the revolver in his pocket and blow the man's brains out. He looked into the dark, evil eyes of the American crook and shivered. He was at his mercy and knew it.

"Which shall it be," asked Stall, growing impatient. "I can't wait a year."

Lorraine nearly bit his lip through.

By robbing Pentland he would strike a blow at Sylvia Sharp, who wanted to hand him over to the authorities. He would thus get rid of two people who might in time drag him to prison and here was a way out of it.

"I'll help you," he said to Jacob Stall.

"That's right. There's nothing wrong in robbing a robber."

Lorraine was silent.

"I saw them start on their ride," continued Stall. "The mysterious valise was not with them."

"He may have left it in care of the clerk."

"He did not. He evidently carried off the keys to the room and for once the valise is out of his sight. Now, we must get into that room. You can do so. I happen to have spotted you the moment you arrived in the city. I know the number of your room. It adjoins Pentland's. You are slim of body and there's nothing to prevent you from going in through the transom of the connecting door.

The cashier breathed hard.

"I'll wait here thirty minutes. If you are not here with the swag I'll turn you over to the police."

A cold sweat seemed to break out on Lorraine's forehead. He was in the toils of this notorious and merciless rascal. Truly the wages of sin were death.

He got up, breathing hard.

"I'll be back within that time," said he and in another moment he was out of sight and a supreme smile gathered at the crook's mouth.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SHADOW ON THE PRIMROSE PATH.

In the gathering shades of another soft Italian day, Saul Pentland sat in the sumptuous apartment which his stolen money had bought.

He was quite alone, for Sylvia had retired to her own apartments to robe herself for the opera and as the fragrant smoke of his cigar floated out at the open window, he seemed at his ease. The drive along the shore of the wonderful bay had been a bewitching one and for a little while he had forgotten the events of the past few weeks and no longer seemed to feel that remorse which now and then had gnawed at the remnant of conscience he had left.

As Sylvia would not return for some time he amused himself by leaning on the sill and looking into the street below.

Already crowds were hurrying to the various cafes that lined the esplanade, but now and then he thought he could detect some representative of his own country.

At last he drew back, rang the bell and summoned a boy who was told to run down and bring him the latest paper.

The boy did so and Pentland, who could not read Italian, turned to the half-page of English reading which the paper contained.

In a moment he became interested.

There before him, in rather large headlines for an Italian journal, was an account of the last efforts of the American authorities to capture the looters of the Reaper's Bank.

He read with bated breath his own name coupled with those of Lorraine and Sylvia Sharp and the account concluded by saying that all United States ministers and consuls in foreign lands would be asked to apprehend the fugitives and turn them over to the authorities.

The American Government was at last aroused.

Pentland's face was white as he read the detailed account and turned, for a moment, surveying himself in the glass.

Just then he heard footsteps in the corridor beyond the door and it opened to admit Sylvia Sharp.

She was clad magnificently and her jewels shone with unwonted brilliancy in the light which Pentland had turned on.

"How do I look, my dear?" she said showing off in the middle of the room.

"Splendidly, as you always do," was the reply. "But we cannot go to the opera tonight."

"Not to the opera? We shall never again get an opportunity to see this great Italian star who is the talk of the continent. Not go to the opera when we have our box?"

"We must quit Naples at once. There is a train out in an hour."

She looked at him with distended eyes plainly showing her dissatisfaction.

"What has happened?" she pouted.

For reply he handed her the paper and she turned with it in her hand to the light.

He watched her covertly, but closely, as she read the same lines that had startled him.

Not a trace of fear came to her face. This woman was fear proof, she was as cool in the midst of danger as a stoic.

"Is that all?" she exclaimed, handing back the paper. "Is that little thing to keep us from the opera?"

"Is that not enough?"

"It is nothing. These stupid Italian police——"

"We must take no chances," said he. "They may discover us, for the hotels will be searched and——"

"You need not fear. A little money will bribe these pig-headed officials. They are all susceptible to bribes and I will undertake that—after the opera."

"You forget the light that will be thrown upon our box."

She came toward him suddenly with the mien of a tigress.

"You are a coward!" cried she, halting before him and watching him closely with a flash in the depths of her dark orbs. "You start at the slightest sound and tremble like an aspen leaf. You need nerve, my dear. If you think that child of yours will find you you may at once dismiss that thought."

"Why so?"

"She will never find any one."

The look that came into Sylvia's eyes as she spoke, almost caused Pentland to leap from his chair.

"What have you done to my child, woman?" he almost hissed.

"Nothing that I had not a right to do. I have just seen to it that she does not meddle in her father's affairs for the present."

"But what have you done, I say?"

The American banker was on his feet and his hands were clenched as he faced the woman to whom he largely owed his ruin.

She fell back a step and smiled derisively, her bosom rising and falling like the tides of the sea, while she regarded him with the mien of a lioness.

"Come! We must get ready for the opera," she went on with the coolness of a practiced hand. "Afterward we will discuss a journey elsewhere."

"Not a step. Will you tell me what has happened to Clyde?"

She walked across the room and leaning against the bureau fingered the lace at the end of her gloves.

"What has happened to Clyde, did you say, my dear?" she asked tantalizingly.

"Yes, to my child. What have you done to her?"

"You are inclined to be accusative."

"You said not long ago that the points of Italian stilettos were sharp."

"So you have not forgotten my words?"

"How could I forget them under the circumstances?"

"Very well. They are sharp all the same."

"But my child, woman? What have you done to her?"

"What proof have you that I have interfered with her happiness at all?"

"Your words, your mien accuse you!" cried Pentland. "I could leave you penniless in Naples——"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the adventuress. "And I could within ten minutes have you under lock and key and booked for America."

It was diamond cut diamond, but the woman had the advantage.

"Your child," said she slowly, counting her words, as it were. "She will not catch us. She is a little too slow for that."

"You have not harmed her, then?"

"She has not been harmed," spoke Sylvia. "Only she is where she can not give us trouble. It is now for the opera, my dear?"

"No! for the outskirts of this city," and Pentland stamped the floor in his rage. "No opera when all Naples is looking for me. If you want to go to see the great star you can go, but as for me I am going away."

Her countenance fell for a moment and her gloved hands moved nervously.

"Is that your decision?" she asked coldly.

"It is. I am going away if they will let me!"

In an instant she had torn from her throat the magnificent necklace that had cost thousands—the sweat of the poor—and from her hands the jeweled rings.

"Take back what you have stolen!" she cried. "Restore to the poor dupes of your bank the money you have taken. To perdition with you, thief! I quit you forever!"

The door opened and shut and Saul Pentland was alone.

The jewels glittered on the floor with unwonted brilliancy, they looked as beautiful there as on the swan-like throat of Sylvia Sharp.

He said nothing, but picked them up, put them in his pocket with a wan smile.

It seemed to him that he was at the end of the primrose way.

At last he turned to the window and looked down upon the street.

He saw Sylvia enter a cabriolet and vanish. He thought she looked up at the window with a farewell glance, but he was not quite sure; she was gone.

Slowly the banker turned from the street. The little room held for him the silence of fate, the lights seemed to fall upon a bier

(Continued on page eleven.)

I CURED MYSELF

I Will Gladly Send Anyone My Treatment FREE TO TRY If You Have

Consumption

Catarrh, Bronchitis, Asthma, a Chronic Hacking Cough or Sore Throat, Sore Lungs, or Any Other Deadly Symptom of Consumption.

Send Your Name Today

I'll send you by return mail my new **Ozonized Lung Developer**, together with my new **Rational System of Treatment**, which is producing such marvelous results in healing diseased lungs. Instantly checks the breaking down process, and develops new cell tissues just as you develop muscles. Creates resisting power, circulation, appetite, flesh, health.

J. Lawrence Hill, A. M., M. D.

Try my Developer and Treatment **Free.** Then if you are satisfied with the benefit received, you can send me my special price, $2.50. If not, keep your money. **You decide** after you try my Treatment, and you can see that I couldn't afford to make this offer if my System of Treatment was not a complete success. Write today to Dr. J. Lawrence Hill, RZ46, Hill Laboratories, Jackson, Mich. Send no money—only your name.

3263 Transparent, Hidden Name, Silk Fringe Envelope and Calling Card Joker and Escort CARDS NO TRASH, with Agent's Best Sample Book. All for a 2-CENT stamp. Buckeye Card Co., Laceyville, Ohio.

PILES Permanently *Cured.* Instant relief. Destroys the *Parasite* in *Itching Piles.* No More Torture. Trial box MAILED FREE. Address The Germ Cure, 202-9th St. Cincinnati, O, Dept. 12

IT PAYS men with small capital to give Public Exhibitions with a Magic Lantern, Stereopticon or Moving Picture Outfit. Catalogue free. McALLISTER, Mfg. Optician, 49 Nassau St., N. Y.

WANTED MEN TO LEARN BARBER TRADE. Few weeks completes. Tools given, positions waiting, qualified instructors, steady practice, registered diplomas. Board provided if desired. Write nearest Branch. Moler System of Colleges, Chicago, Ill., St. Louis, Mo., Kansas City, Mo., New Orleans, La., Cincinnati, O., Omaha, Neb., Dallas or San Antonio, Tex.

HAVE YOU RHEUMATISM? There's a guaranteed cure for it. Money back if it fails. It also knocks out colds, grip, lumbago, and pleurisy. Sooner you send 50c and get the guaranteed cure, the sooner your trouble will let up. Do it NOW. L. N. KEMPER, 125 La Salle Street, Chicago, Ill.

X-RAY CATHODOSCOPE Latest pocket curiosity out. Everybody wants it. Tells time on watch through cloth; apparently see your fellow, best girl, or any object through clothing, wood or stone any distance; all climates; lasts lifetime; always ready for use. Price 25 cents, stamps or silver. Address THE R. EVOLIA CO., Phila., Pa.

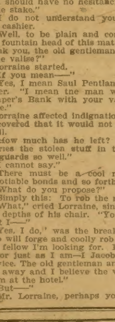
I Print My Own Cards Circulars, books, newspaper. Card press $5. Larger $18. Money saver, maker. All easy, printed rules. Write factory for catalog presses, type, paper, cards. THE PRESS CO., Meriden, Conn.

NO INTER-CITY SOCIAL CORRESPONDENCE CLUB

Gold Watch AND RING FREE ALTON WATCH CO., Dept. 4 Chicago.

MENDING TISSUE The WONDER of the Age. No sewing or darning. Repairs clothing, silk, satin, cotton goods, ribbons, fabrics of all kinds, kid gloves, mackintoshes, umbrellas, parasols, stockings, etc. Package, postpaid, 10 cents; 3 packages, 25 cents. Address Penn Publishing Co., Parnassus, Pa.

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.



No Money to Pay WE GIVE IT AWAY

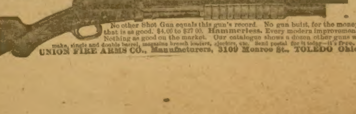
This beautiful Oak Chair is given away absolutely free of money cost. It's a Sterling Premium; that is why it's such a good one. All Sterling Premiums are High Class. We have 700 to give away with such orders as Teas, Coffees, Chocolates, Spices, Threads, Extracts, Laundry and Toilet Soaps, Toilet Articles, Pharmical Preparations, and Other Home Needs. Our choice Pure Food Products cannot be excelled. Over 250 articles in all. **Won Highest Award at World's Fair.** Prices less than you pay elsewhere. We send $10.00 worth of goods for $5. Saves you $5 cash. Makes $1 sent us equal $2 spent elsewhere. You use such an order in your home every few weeks.

SOLID OAK

So Write Today and receive Free a choice sample of our Pure Food Products (postpaid).

STERLING SUPPLY CO., Dept. 204 CHICAGO, ILL.

FREE BOOK TELLS OF THIS SIX SHOTS IN FOUR SECONDS.



No other Shot Gun equals this gun's record. No gun built, for the money, that is as good. $4.00 to $27.00. Hammerless. Every modern improvement. Nothing as good on the market. Our catalogue shows a dozen other guns we make, single and double barrel, magazine breech loaders, ejectors, etc. Send postal for it today—it's free. UNION FIRE ARMS CO., Manufacturers, 3109 Monroe St., TOLEDO Ohio.

Just the One.

Gunner—I am going to try to sell my automobile.
Guyer—To whom?
Gunner—Oh, some politician.
Guyer—But why a poutician?
Gunner—Because it is such a good mud-thrower.

A Very Careful Cook.

Guest—I told you not to open my eggs, didn't I?
Waiter—Yes, sir, but we've got an inexperienced cook, and he said he'd have to open them to see if they were done.

JOKES AND

You notice this high Collar ?
Well it is lined with steel
And when I have it on
Much more comfortable
I feel.

Hot and Cold.

Pete Persimmon—Yeas, Ah reckon Ah am fated to be a bachelor. Ah lubed a gal once, but she threw cold watah on mah suit.
Henry Ham—Well, dat's bettah den gittin' mahbided on habit yo' wife throw hot watah on yo' suit. Dat's what mine does ebby time I stay out after 10.

A Buried Treasure.

Dumley—I met a fellow today who was simply nutty about a buried treasure; couldn't talk of anything else.
Peckham—That reminds me of my wife.
Dumley—Oh, does she talk about one?
Peckham—Yes; her first husband. I'm her second, you know.

Better Still.

Braggs—I have an uncle who has money enough to enable him to do as he pleases.
Naggs—Huh! That's nothing. One of my uncles is rich enough to enable him to do as his wife pleases.

Keen Vision.

Harkes—Longreen is a far-sighted chap, isn't he?
Parker—That's what. Since I touched him for $10 he can see me three blocks away.

Fears Concerning the Cook.

"Is our new cook clean, dear?"
"I'm afraid not. When I asked her what kind of soap she used to wash the vegetables she said she didn't use any."

Preferred the Gout.

Early in the past century there was a kind of sherry which it was said was a certain cure for the gout. It was "specialite." An attempt was made to get a testimonial for it from Lord Derby, and a basket of wine was sent to him.
Lord Derby wrote to the wine-merchant as follows:
"Dear Sir: I have tried your sherry and prefer the gout."

Not a Bad Guess.

Gent—What makes you call me a pugilist, boy?
Boy—'Cause I s'pose yer goin' ter knock de stuffin' out of a turkey at some swell Thanksgiving dinner.

Giving Him a Lesson.

Mrs. Ferguson (with great severity)—George, do you think it's good manners to interrupt a person who is talking?
Mr. Ferguson—No. I don't, Laura. I beg your pardon. I was only going to say——
Mrs. Ferguson—I know just what you were going to say, and I don't want to hear it! It isn't true!

Got Him Mixed.

"I was disappointed in Surchley's campaign speech. I thought he was a regular spellbinder."
"Not at all. You are thinking of some one else. Surchley is a member of a pure food investigating committee. He's a smell-finder."

The Father's Explanation.

"Pa," said little Willie, looking up from his book, "what are 'gastronomics?' "
"Oh—er—lemme see," said pa. "Oh, they're these country jays that blow out the gas."

Reason Why.

Mildred—Why, didn't you marry Mr. Brown? Didn't he have the sand to propose?
Elvira—Oh, yes; he had the sand to propose, but he didn't have sufficient rocks to marry on.

Daring.

The umpire on the baseball field
May risk his life, we know;
But how about the man who'll yield
To judge a baby show?

Cause.

Teacher—What do we call it Thanksgiving Day for?
Adelaide—'Cause we're all so glad we ain't sick on that day an' kin eat.

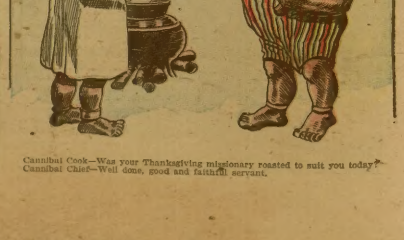
Exciting.

Mrs. A.—You say when your husband went to discharge the cook he was white?
Mrs. Z.—Yes, he was so excited he lathered and then forgot to shave.

Those Dear Girls.

Stella—Did you see the engagement ring Jack gave Maude?
Ethel—Yes. It's the same one I wore last season.

Consolation.



Cannibal Cook—Was your Thanksgiving missionary roasted to suit you today?
Cannibal Chief—Well done, good and faithful servant.

COFFEE IMPORTERS

Publish a Book About Coffee.

There has been much discussion as to Coffee and Postum lately, so much in fact that some of the coffee importers and roasters have taken to type to promote the sale of their wares and check if possible the rapid growth of the use of Postum Food Coffee.
In the coffee importers' book a chapter is headed "Coffee Is a Medicine" and advocates its use as such.
Here is an admission of the truth, most important to all interested.
Every physician knows, and every thoughtful person should know, that habitual use of any "medicine" of the drug-stimulant type of coffee or whisky quickly causes irritation of the tissues and organs stimulated and finally sets up disease in the great majority of cases if persisted in. It may show in any one of the many organs of the body and in the great majority of cases can be directly traced to coffee in a most unmistakable way by leaving off the active irritant—coffee—and using Postum Food Coffee for a matter of ten days. If the result is relief from nervous trouble, dyspepsia, bowel complaint, heart failure, weak eyes, or any other malady set up by a poisoned nervous system, you have your answer with the accuracy of a demonstration in mathematics.
"There's a reason" for Postum.

Prophecy Fulfilled.

The weather man climbed to the top of his observation tower and began to observe.
"We will probably have a long and severe fall," he said.
Just then he lost his balance and fell to the floor twenty feet below.
"Thank goodness!" he exclaimed, as he proceeded to pick himself up. "One of my predictions has come true."

Ready for Business.

She had called to consult a fashionable physician who was famous for his way-up prices.
"Pardon me, doctor," she began, "but do you—er—take anything off for cash?"
"Certainly, madam," replied the M. D. "What would you like taken off—a hand or a foot?"

Same Old Brand.

Puffem—You know that box of cigars you gave me on my birthday?
Mrs. Puffem—Yes.
Puffem—Well, I took them down to the office and a thief stole them.
Mrs. Puffem—I'm awfully sorry.
Puffem—So am I—for the thief.

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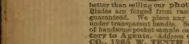
MONEY TO AGENTS.



Agents find our goods so easy to sell that they make better than selling our photo-knives of quality. Blades are forged from razor steel. Every knife is guaranteed. We place our photo, enclosed in same under transparent handle. Send for terms and photo of handle and sample case. Exclusive territory to Agents. Address CANTON CUTLERY CO., 1008 W. TENTH ST., CANTON, OHIO

AGENTS CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Experience Paid. Yarmo Press. Reserve Agency Co., Box 201, Sta'n L, New York

$1.00 AN HOUR Introducing Electric Combs, Brushes, and our Patents. Spare time will do. Write for terms. Sample sent prepaid. 50 C. P. STOCK, 1431 Penn Ave., Pittsburg, Pa.

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES to men with rig to introduce our Poultry Compound. STANDARD MEDICINE CO., Dept. 7 PARSONS, KANS.

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

JOLLITY

Doing Well.

Aunt Cleo—Howde, Mistah Ebony? Is you'sh son doin' well now?

Mistah Ebony—He am doin' fine, Madame Cleo; he am de entry clerk at de Pashion Hotel.

Aunt Cleo—Entry clerk! What's that?

Mistah Ebony—He 'tends doah at the front entry.

A Beautiful Niagara Picture.

There is nothing better to hang on one's wall than a fine picture of some grand scene of nature. Niagara Falls is probably the grandest sight on earth, and one of the most picturesque of the cataract is the water color of Chas. Graham. This has been reproduced by lithography in twelve colors, 15x24 in., on heavy plate paper and will be sent to any postoffice in the world on receipt of fifty cents, in stamps or currency. Address, O. W. Ruggles, G. P. A., Michigan Central R. R., Chicago.

A Rheumatic Fight.

First Citizen—Do you mean to say that since you have been working at a dynamite station you have got rid of your rheumatism?

Second Citizen—Just so. The disease seems to have left me and gone into my watch.

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 401, Blairsville, Pa.

In Training.

The Duck—So old Gobbler don't eat anything but cement these days? That's queer diet.

The Rooster—Yes, he is in hopes it will make him so hard he will break the ax the day before Thanksgiving.

CURE FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO.

The Kansas Anti-Liquor Society is mailing free a recipe for the cure of the liquor habit. It can be given secretly in food. Also one for the tobacco habit that can be given secretly. The only request they make is that you do not sell recipes but give copies to friends. Address Kansas Anti-Liquor Society, 35 Gray Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

Day and Night Device.

Mrs. Loudun—Here's an article advertised that you ought to have, John.

Loudun—What is it?

Mrs. Loudun—A device that prevents snoring by keeping one's mouth closed while asleep.

Loudun—Good! I'll order one for you.

Mrs. Loudun—But I don't snore.

Loudun—But perhaps it will enable you to keep your mouth closed while awake.

Force of Habit.

The modern Sherlock stood in the bow of the sinking ship and smiled grimly.

"I'll bet that chap in the green coat used to be a milkman," he announced.

"Why so?" asked the friend.

"Because when the captain bellowed 'Man the pumps!' he was the first to respond."

Embracing.

Eva—You—you used to call me your summer rose?

Jack—Yes, and now I shall call you my autumn leaf.

Eva—Autumn leaf? And why?

Jack—Because I am going to press you.

Baby Is King.

Peddler—Is the head of the house in?

Young Mother—No; he's out with his nurse in the perambulator.

Sharpe—Have you read the new football rules?

Wise—No. How many players are they allowed to kill in a game now?

Appreciated.

Gussie Gunn—Here is another box of candy, dear. I—I hope I am not burdening you with too many.

Miss Tabasco—Oh, no, indeed. I wish you would bring me one every time you call.

Gussie Gunn—Thanks, awfully. I am so glad they are appreciated.

Miss Tabasco—Yes, indeed. The ribbons on the boxes look so beautiful around Fido's neck.

Furless Variety.

"George," said the wife of the baseball player, "I think you should spare me at least two muffs this winter. I want a change, you know."

"Muffs?" echoed her husband in astonishment. "Why, I haven't any muffs!"

"No muffs? Why, where are all those the papers said you made during the summer?"

Highly Connected.

Griggs—That fellow Spicer claims to be connected with some of our best families.

Briggs—He is. He takes their orders for groceries over the phone.

Lucky Dog.

The clipped poodle of the multi-millionaire's daughter was languidly lapping a saucer of the finest cream.

"What do you call that?" asked the tramp dog as he peered enviously through the grating.

"This?" replied the aristocratic poodle. "Oh, this is what they call the lap luxury and enjoyed only by the rich."

Turning over the saucer the blue-blooded canine wabbled in to take his perfumed bath.

Not in Their Set.

He—I do not see why such a dear little duck as you should not be welcome in society.

She—Oh, the society of our city is run by a lot of old hens, and little ducks don't belong to their set.

Kind to His Fellow Men.

"Just before poor old Dooley died he made his wife promise that she would not marry again."

"Poor old chap—he always was kind to his fellow men!"

The Old Rooster—I don't see why you call yourself a Thanksgiving turkey? You wasn't killed for Thanksgiving.

Turkey Gobbler—Of course, I wasn't. That's why I'm a Thanksgiving turkey.

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10 TOOLS IN ONE — AGENTS WANTED QUICK — FARMERS STAND BY — Hammer, Hatchet, Screw Driver, Staple Puller, Nail Claw, Wire Cutter, Leather Punch, Findere. — Every Farmer Wants One at Sight

FREE to LADIES a $3 Newport Shawl for selling 20 pkt. only 25 pictures, size 16x20, in fine colors, free. Send your name to Lock Box 3233, Portland, Ind.

$100 PER MONTH and traveling expenses paid salesman to sell our goods to dealers. Experience unnecessary. DEFIANCE & CO., Parsons, Kansas.

AGENTS WANTED to sell the Celebrated Morris Chair. Big commission. Write for terms. Morris Chair Co., 1 Jefferson St., Rockford, Ill.

SAXOPHONE Cheapest Musical Instrument made. Write for catalogue and free trial offer. C. G. CONN, 1 Conn Bldg., Elkhart, Ind.

$36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES TO MEN with rigs to introduce our Stock Poultry Goods. RAVELLE CO., Dept. 30, Parsons, Kansas.

STARK bro's Trees—TO FILL. We PAY CASH WANT MORE SALESMEN Each Week. Stark Nursery, Louisiana, Mo.; Dansville, N.Y.

SELL TOBACCO and cigars, locally or traveling. Good pay. Steady employment. Write for terms or call. Dept. 1, Lorillard Co., Address Maretock Tobacco Works, Box J 19, Danville, Va.

LADIES WANTED to do family work. Easy, rapid; no canvassing or experience; steady work; materials furnished. Free designs and particulars mailed. STAMP BOX, Box 325, PORTLAND, Oregon.

$80 A MONTH Expenses advanced. Distributing Manager to travel and leave supplies on counters. PEOPLE'S SUPPLY CO., Dept. C46, 61 Plymouth Pl., Chicago.

FREE Seventy Pieces of Sheet Music for Christmas and New Year's Entertainments. Send for complete catalogue and sample piece. 20 New Songs, 25 Cents. 10 Vocal Duets for each. No less than 10 sold. No per fill. ANDREW BOOME, Boome Building, Mount Vernon, N.Y.

$18 to $30 WEEKLY Guaranteed Men & Women Local Work. Spare time will do. Address at once, Box 1, Bloomington, Ill.

WANTED 10 men in each state to travel, distribute samples of our goods and take advertising signs. Salary $80 per month. $3 per day for expenses. SAUNDERS CO., Dept. F, Jackson Blvd., Chicago

PICTURE AGENTS Large 24 x 30 Wall Pictures cost 8c complete, sell for 25c each. Big profits. Also Crayon, Water Color and Portrait Cts. Address PHOTO CO., Dept. B, WAYNE, Ill.

CEREAL COOKER Allows steam to circulate over and into the kernels making them tender and easily digested. Perfect in quality. Sells on sight. Exclusive territory to agts. Send 15c. Household Specialty Works, 2215 Madison St., Chicago

$3 a Day Sure Send us your address and we will show you how to make $3 a day absolutely sure; we mean what we say; we will furnish the work and teach you free, you work in the locality where you live and report to us every night; when the work is started properly you can make $3 a day and more; if all is not as we say, you lose nothing. Write at once. NATIONAL MANUFACTURING CO., 810 Shukert Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

WANTED YOUNG MEN Fireman, Electrician, Surface Porter, Passenger Brakeman, Sheet Metal Worker, Railway Mail Clerk, Stenographer, Telegraph Operator, Letter Carrier, Machinist, Motorman, Conductor, Engineering Positions, Firemen, Colored Firemen, Write immediately, stating position for sample lessons. INTERNATIONAL CORR. SCHOOLS, Box A, SCRANTON, PA.

MEN WANTED Reliable men in each county throughout the United States to advertise goods, tacking up show cards, distribute dodgers, fences, bridges and all conspicuous places; distributing samples at stores, residences, etc. Commission or salary $80 a month and expenses $2 a day. Steady employment all year round. We have a reliable record of over 20 years. No experience needed. Write for full particulars. THE NATIONAL CO., 1 Reaper Block, Chicago, Ill.

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IMPATIENCE.

BY ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

Only to follow you, dearest, only to find you!
Only to feel for one instant the touch of your hand;
Only to tell you once of the love you left behind you—
To say the world without you is like a desert of sand;

That the flowers have lost their perfume, the rose its splendor,
And the charm of nature is lost in a dull stupor;
That joy went out with the glance of your eyes so tender,
And beauty passed with the lovely smile on your lips.

I did not dream it was you who kindled the morning
And fed the evening purple in peace so sweet;
But you took the whole world's capture without a warning,
And left me naught save the print of your patient feet.

I count the days and the hours that hold us
I long for words friendly and which shall
With my longing lightning flesh and the
golden thunder.
These clouds of the earth, and give me my
own again!

THE GOOD KING'S SON.

Long, long ago, in a beautiful country over the seas, there ruled a wise king and a good queen. And the King was beloved of his people and whenever the Queen walked abroad the poor blessed her as she went. It is hard to say just why the King was so wise, and just why the Queen was so good—some people said that the good Lord had made them so, and others said that the King and Queen had made themselves so.

Although they lived in a great palace, with marble columns and floors, and ate on silver platters as kings and queens do, yet that king and queen were neither haughty nor selfish. The King had such a love for his people that he went among them constantly, sometimes even in disguise, so that they should not treat him as a king, but rather as a fellow man. Some people even said that in disguise the King had gone years before and learned the trade of a blacksmith and that all the King had a mind to, he could build a house as fine as his own castle, because he had learned carpentry. Of course, the King must have known that he would never have to shoe a horse or build a house, so he must have had some other reason for learning these things. Perhaps he had learned these things, and a great many more, so that he could understand the lives of all of his subjects, and could talk to his people about things that they liked and understood best.

Now the King and the good Queen had two sons. The elder, who was to be a king when the wise king died, was a worthy prince. The King took the Prince about among his people, to the homes and workshops of the laborers in his kingdom, and taught him many things that the carpenters and masons and blacksmiths and weavers and miners and bakers and butchers knew. He showed the Prince all the things that were of use to the world, and how difficult it would be for it to get along at all without them.

"What would you do for a house if all the carpenters refused to build one?"

"Build it myself," said the Prince, stoutly.

"Ah, but could you?" asked the wise king. "Could you build it so strong that it would be safe? Even then you would need the masons and the weavers and the cabinet makers and many more to help you finish it."

And in this way he showed him and taught him, so that the young prince was likely to grow up to be as wise as his father—and then, one day, a great misfortune came. The city, in the midst of which the palace stood, became infected with a great sickness, called "the plague," and many people died of it. And among the first to die was the Prince. It was believed that the Prince had got the plague when he was going about with the King.

The wise king grieved deeply for his son, and the good queen's tears was like to wash the world away. The Prince was buried with all the pomp befitting a royal child, and nearly all the people of the city, save those stricken with sickness, followed in the funeral train, grieving with the King, yet feeling all the nearer and closer to him, and loving him all the more; for now not only did he love them and know their labors and their lives, but now he also knew their sorrows, for many among them had also lost children with the plague.

Time went on and the second child of the wise king and the good queen grew to be a tall boy—straight, comely prince, very like his older brother who was dead. But the good queen would not long permit the King to take the Prince among the laboring people, as he had taken the Prince's brother, for she feared with a great fear that the Prince, like his brother, might take some sickness and die; so she kept him within the palace gardens. The gardens were widened for his pleasure, and every possible enjoyment put in them, so that he would not long to go out in the city among the blacksmiths and miners and weavers and spinners, as his brother had done. The King, it is true, still went among these people, and the good queen went daily to visit the poor and to minister to their sufferings, but the Prince played with his golden ball about the marble fountain in the palace gardens, or sat beneath the great trees and dreamed long dreams of when he should be king, or chased the butterflies and they fluttered over the high wall of the palace garden, and out of his reach into the big city into which he never went.

This continued for several years, until the Prince was 12 years old, and then the good queen died, and the King grieved for her so sorely that in a short while he, too, fell ill and died, and left the little prince to be king.

The young man had many courtiers, wise men, to help him rule, one especially called Whynot, who had been guardian; but he chose to rule as he thought best, and though he meant to do what was right, yet he knew so little about ruling over hundreds of people that he made a good many unnecessary foolish laws; and once, when he found the carpenters and masons disobeying one of his laws, he ordered the whole lot, useful workmen as they were, to be put into prison.

There was a great prison near by the palace, which had not been used for many years during the wise king's reign. This was now opened and a heavy guard set about it day and night, and twenty-eight carpenters and thirty-four masons were imprisoned in it. By and by the people, thinking that the young king ruled them unwisely, began to rule themselves and disobey the young king's harsh laws. The weavers refused to spin cloth for the King and his court, and thereupon the King had all the weavers and spinners thrown into prison; at this, the blacksmiths and the bakers with whom the King's court had been dealing began to take up the cudgels in their behalf and double what they had before charged, and the young king, in a great rage, ordered them all seized by his guard and thrown into prison; and so it was with the butchers and many more tradespeople.

The court was in dismay, but the young king was firm. He wished all the tradespeople to know that he was king, and would rule as he liked. Nothing was done for a considerable time, and then everything began to go from bad to worse.

One day old Whynot came to the King and said: "Sire, prison fattens, but the city is growing unhealthful because it leans."

And the young king dismissed him with a curling rebuke. The entire court was unhappy; and for lack of workmen to do necessary things the palace fell into despair. One day the King was among his courtiers and they all looked very glum.

"Come, gentlemen, be merry," said the King, ascending his throne and frowning at them from their gilded seats.

"Sire," said one of the courtiers, "it is difficult to be merry on an empty stomach. Since the prisons were filled with all the cooks and bakers, provisions have run so low that we are all of us hungry, and very likely to be hungrier as the days go on and your majesty does not relent."

"Away, gluttons, and dine into tatters," said another of the courtiers. "Since the weavers and spinners are imprisoned, how shall we reclothe ourselves?"

"And he that of the palace garden is fallen in a storm," said another, "and the masons who should fix it your majesty has imprisoned."

"And," said another, "the very legs of our chairs are worn and rickety, and much do we need the cabinetmakers whom your majesty punishes with imprisonment."

Another courtier was about to speak, but the King stopped him in great wrath, for though he was only a boy, he could look as black and frown as fierce a frown as any man.

"Hold your idle tongues," said he, "and know that what the King says is law. And though the whole court should go hungry, and though you all should wear tatters before me, and though the walls fall about you, and the chairs are not left you to sit upon—you shall learn that a king's word is law."

The courtiers dared say nothing, and old Whynot shook his head sadly and the scene was dismissed.

A week later, the King himself began to feel the pangs of hunger, and his own kingly robes were growing worn, and his feet were sore for want of a pair of shoes. Many of his courtiers were ill from hunger, and the court was in a sorry plight. Then the King, still angry and unwilling to be beholden to the tradespeople, ordered his courtiers to do as best they could the work of his tradespeople; but the bread the courtiers baked was heavy and the clothes they made were uncomfortable, and the chairs they mended broke again, and the wall they built up fell again in a night.

Then the King began to see his folly, and he called Whynot to him.

"What is the matter, Whynot, that I cannot carry out my laws? Why do not my people obey me and love me? Why are we in this sorry plight?"

"Sire," said the old man, "you have forgotten to note that a king is not needed by his people more than his people are needed by him. Sire, you cannot longer live without your tradespeople."

Then the boy put his head in his arms and wept, for he hated to give up his authority, and old Whynot stole out and left him alone.

In the morning it was found that the gates of the grim prison stood open, and in the palace the little king was no longer to be found and old Whynot ruled in his stead.

Some people say that years afterwards a tall man, looking very like the wise king who was dead, came back to the beautiful country, and because of his wisdom was proclaimed king; and it is also said that this king knew even more than the wise king who was dead, about shoeing a horse and building a house. And this king, though he said nothing about it, could remember when as a boy he had played in the palace garden. Somewhere out in the world he had lived with the tradespeople and learned their trades.—Kindergarten Review.

Only a Dream.

"How strange, and he promised to come by 5, and there's the clock striking the—Heavens, he is here, Mr. Solder, I sent for you to—"

"Now, I beg you won't disturb yourself to say a word. I see at once what's the trouble. It is a trifle—a trouble—some matter, but one easily remedied. I need only a wrench and a soldering iron."

"And when will you be back?"

"Back? Why, I have all my tools in the wagon outside. I always bring them when called professionally. Everything will be adjusted in 20 minutes, and the cost will be little or nothing—perhaps 25 cents."

(Fifteen minutes seem to pass.)

"There, my good sir, all is in order and guaranteed for a year. If all is well by next year you can pay me 25 cent, I will pay you for the trouble I have caused. Now as soon as I have put the room in order, swept the floor, dusted the furniture and oiled the woodwork, I will leave you. Thank you, sir."

"And you are a plumber?"

"Yes."

"And the year is—"

"Nineteen hundred and—"

(But here the housebolder awoke.)—Puck.

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$250.00 CASH! This sum will be distributed in prizes. Do you want a share of it? Then answer QUICKLY. Open to all, young or old of either sex. COSTS NOTHING TO COMPETE.

An Underground Chase.

(Continued from page fourteen.)

volver tightly, and stealthily followed Bill, listening to the sound of his heavy shoes crunching the quartz floor, and at the same time keeping on the alert for any ominous sounds behind him.

Bill heard her footsteps quite distinctly as she pattered after him, but being so excited, he was in no frame of mind to tell whether they were made by the small feet of a woman or the heavy tread of a gigantic monster tearing along with huge [illegible]

"He ain't through with me yet," he gasped. "If I can only get where it is light. Fighting spooks in the dark ain't no cinch, I tell you."

He was too frightened to pick his way carefully, but flew on toward a bright spot just visible at the other end of the tunnel, like a fugitive of old bending his energies to reach the house of refuge beyond the clutches of his pursuers.

A large round stone lay in the middle of the passage, but Cougar Bill did not become aware of its exact position till he [illegible] stubbed against it, sending him sprawling [illegible] his face.

The frightened wretch was completely unnerved by his unexpected fall. Not a hand had been placed upon him, yet he was so overcome by a superstitious fear of the unknown world and its [illegible] that he could not control his feelings [illegible] vent to a wild yell.

Dora was hardly able to suppress her mirth, though she dared not let a sound escape her for fear that a knowledge of her presence would recall Bill's attention from the spirit regions and direct it to her.

He lay grovelling on the ground for [illegible] expecting to feel a cold, clammy hand clutch his throat.

Finally he gathered himself together and observed a light in the direction whence he expected the "ghost" to descend upon him.

"Ha—ha," he grunted in surprise, when nothing occurred.

Dora had discreetly hidden herself, awaiting developments. The silence gave Bill courage, and he rose to a sitting position.

"This is funny," he said in a voice just beginning to recover from the effects of its former steadiness and bravado. Yet there was a tone of uncertainty when he said:

"The spook takes a pot-shot at me, and chases me like mad, but when he gets me down off my pins so I ain't no good to put up a fight, why he skidoos. That ain't natural, even for spooks, and I allow that they do a whole lot of things that humans never did to my knowledge."

Dora was seized with a sudden impulse to add to Bill's present discomfiture by impressing him with the belief that the "ghost" had by no means left the vicinity.

"I think that I can make my voice deep enough for him to imagine that it comes from the departed masculine dead," she mused. "Anyway, I will try. It is necessary to frighten him so that he will run on without once looking back, or otherwise, he will walk leisurely toward the light and perhaps look over his shoulder from time to time to see if there is anything following him. The nearer we get to the light, the greater danger of his seeing me."

"There ain't no ghost after us," muttered Bill, in an effort to keep his courage, as he looked at the dark spot where Dora was carefully concealed. "I'm a fool."

At that instant a hollow voice droned "Cougar Bill!"

It seemed to come from the depths of the earth.

[illegible] vengeance no longer. I have you in my power [illegible] for in two minutes more [illegible] prediction that for the next [illegible] be recorded [illegible] and giving vent to an [illegible] rushed on without waiting to hear [illegible]

If he had felt skeptical at all as to the presence of a ghost his doubts [illegible] when he heard the words of Dora [illegible] he thought to be his death knell.

"Now," said the young girl, "to get out of this tunnel to some [illegible] where I can [illegible] myself."

[illegible] on behind the frightened [illegible] by the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to keep in the right direction [illegible]

[illegible] be necessary [illegible] [illegible] here on a level [illegible] she reflected.

It [illegible] before the [illegible] of light toward which they were going expanded to [illegible] size. Bill did not slacken his pace, but Dora knew that she saw that she had been safely led out of the woods, as it were—figuratively speaking.

She watched Bill with keen interest, and it was well that she was looking directly at him at the time, for the moment he reached the end of the corridor and stood in the glare of light that shed its rays several feet into it, the villain drew his revolver and fired a shot in her direction.

In next week's issue of this paper the reader will be given another installment of this exciting story. The management has in stock some of the best stories for boys ever written. These will appear in these pages during the coming months. If you desire the Ledger regularly please note our advertisement of free King Cameras and free subscription to paper thirteen and fifteen and subscribe at once.

A Couple of Roosevelt Stories.

One night in camp Roosevelt told us the story of one of his rough riders who had just written him from some place in Arizona. The rough riders, wherever they are now, look to him in time of trouble. This one had come to grief in Arizona. He was in jail. So he wrote the President, and his letter ran something like this:

"Dear Colonel, I am in trouble. I shot a lady in the eye, but I did not intend to hit the lady; I was shooting at my wife."

And the presidential laughter rang out over the tree tops. To another rough rider, who was in jail accused of horse-stealing, he had loaned two hundred dollars to pay counsel on his trial, and, to his surprise, in due time the money came back. The extraordinary letter that his trial never came off. "We elected our district attorney," and the laughter again sounded, and drowned the noise of the brook near us.

Father—Does Emily seem to have got over the death of her first husband?

Daughter—Yes, but her second husband hasn't.

It Pays to Advertise.

When the teacher was absent from the schoolroom Billy, the mischievous boy of the class, wrote on the blackboard: "Billy Jones can hug the girls better than any boy in school."

Upon her return the teacher called him up to her desk.

"William, did you write that?" she asked, pointing to the blackboard.

"Yes, ma'am," said Billy.

"Well, you may stay after school," said she, "as punishment."

The other pupils waited for Billy to come out, and then they began guying him.

"Got a lickin', didn't you?"

"Nope," said Billy.

"Got jawed?"

"Nope."

"What did she do?" they asked.

"Shan't tell," said Billy "but it pays to advertise."—Newspaperdom.

Pluck is all right, but good luck frequently leaves it at the post.

The Stolen Millions.

(Continued from page seven.)

and a shrouded form and a sigh escaped his lips as he sat down.

[illegible] of the paper lying [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

A SQUARE DEAL

Is assured you when you buy one of Dr. Pierce's Family Medicines—for all the ingredients entering into them are printed on the bottle-wrappers and their formula are attested under oath as being complete and correct. You know just what you are paying for and that the ingredients are gathered from Nature's laboratory, being selected from the most delicate women and children.

Not a drop of alcohol enters into their composition. A much better agent is used both for extracting and preserving the medicinal principles used in them, viz.—pure triple-refined glycerine of proper strength. This agent possesses intrinsic medicinal properties of its own, being a most valuable anti-septic and anti-ferment, nutritive and soothing demulcent.

Glycerine plays an important part in Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery in the cure of indigestion, dyspepsia and weak stomach, attended by sour risings, "heartburn," foul breath, coated tongue, poor appetite, gnawing feeling in stomach, biliousness and kindred derangements of the stomach, liver and bowels.

Besides curing all the above distressing ailments, the "Golden Medical Discovery" is a specific **for all diseases of the mucous membranes,** as catarrh, whether of the nasal passages or of the stomach, bowels or pelvic organs. Even in its ulcerative stages it will yield to this sovereign remedy if its use be persevered in. In Chronic Catarrh of the Nasal passages, it is well, while taking the "Golden Medical Discovery" for the necessary constitutional treatment, to cleanse the passages freely two or three times a day with Dr. Sages Catarrh Remedy. This thorough course of treatment generally cures even in the worst cases.

In coughs and hoarseness caused by bronchial, throat and lung affections, except consumption in its advanced stages, the "Golden Medical Discovery" is a most efficient remedy, especially in those obstinate, hang-on-coughs caused by irritation and congestion of the bronchial mucous membranes. The "Discovery" is not so good for acute coughs arising from sudden colds, nor must it be expected to cure consumption in its advanced stages—no medicine will do that—but for all the obstinate hang-on, or chronic coughs, which, if neglected, or badly treated, lead up to consumption, it is the best medicine that can be taken.

If the sweet taste of the "Discovery," caused by the glycerine, is disliked, a few drops of lemon juice, orange or lime juice, added to each dose will make it agreeable and pleasant and will not in the slightest interfere with its beneficial effects.

It's an insult to your intelligence for a dealer to endeavor to palm off upon you some nostrum of *unknown composition* in place of Dr. Pierce's world-famed medicines which are OF KNOWN COMPOSITION. Most dealers recommend Dr. Pierce's medicines because they know what they are made of and that the ingredients employed are among the most valuable that a medicine for like purposes can be made of. The same is true of leading physicians who do not hesitate to recommend them, since they know exactly what they contain and that their ingredients are the very best known to medical science for the cure of the several diseases for which these medicines are recommended.

With tricky dealers it is different.

Something else that pays them a little greater profit will be urged upon you as "just as good," or even better. You can hardly afford to accept a substitute *of unknown composition* and without any particular record of cures in place of Dr. Pierce's medicines which are OF KNOWN COMPOSITION and have a record of *forty years of cures* behind them. *You* know what you want and it is the dealer's business to supply that want. *Insist upon it.*

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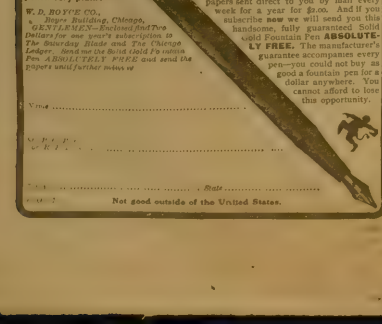

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BY COLONEL W. R. ANDREWS.

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CHAPTER II. (Continued.)

The two young men shook hands warmly.

"Now let's change, quick," urged Pete.

The Bandit Scourge and New Zealand Pete returned to the cell and quickly changed clothing. In a few minutes, the transformation was complete and they stood looking at each other.

"Hello, Pete!" shouted Mark, looking at that worthy. "You are me all right."

"And you are me," replied Pete, "even to the way I wear my throat bands."

Truly the similarity between them was wonderful. Pete in Mark's clothes looked like the Bandit Scourge in life, and as for Mark, he seemed so much like Pete that the latter wondered if he were not looking at himself in some sort of magic mirror, after all.

"Well," he remarked, in accents of pride, "I've been all sorts of things in my life and borne all sorts of names, but I never expected to be the Bandit Scourge."

Mark had to laugh at this, and Pete strutted up and down the little cell.

"I advise you not to walk around very much, if you walk like that," he said. "It would be a dead give-away. Somebody might think it had been transformed into a turkey cock."

Pete laughed.

"I guess that's right," he replied. "But, now, all joking aside, you better get away from here in a hurry next time you know how. Try to find the nearest way to the outside. There's a passage way off to your right that will bring you to the surface, and I know that none of Bill's gang will be in your way. You did not hear me say anything because that might warn them. If Bill comes back, I'll keep him to the finish, and give you plenty of time to get back here with your new throat bands."

"All right. The passage to the right?"

"That's the one. And see here, hadn't you better take this dirk, and, as a weapon, will look shipshape?"

"All right, if you wish it," replied Mark. "But don't you think I'd better leave it open so that I can make a break when the new begins?"

"No, the row won't break loose until you are back and then there will be no time between you and me, so it wouldn't do any good. Don't you worry about me. I've heard from Bill's men, and see exactly what I had a right. I am real eloquent with a barker sort of holler when I get started, you know. In fact, I think Bill would believe I am pretty talky tracks when he hears me talk to dead whoop."

"For goodness' sake, Pete," exclaimed Mark, "keep quiet, as it is enough like were a picnic."

"It is for me, all right. It's a circus. This way for the big show.' And won't I peddle out the pink lemonade to Bill! Whoop!"

"Say, if you don't be quiet, Bill will get wise and the circus you're counting on may not start at all. Keep quiet long enough for me to get out, won't you?"

"Well, I'll try to hold the hand for your sake, Mark. But get out quick. I've got so much real live yell stored up in me that I'll bust if you wait much longer. Beat it, kid, beat it to a frazzle."

Mark saw that the best thing for him to do was to get out as soon as he could, so with a final caution—at which Pete let off a subdued "Whoop"—he darted up the passage pointed out.

The Outlaw Scourge was groping his way along this passage when he heard the rustle of a skirt a short way in advance.

The light was too dim for him to distinguish anything but the outlines of a girl's figure, but his instinct told him that the other was Dora Gordon, his girl pard whom he had last seen in Pine Bluff, a small town fifty miles away. She was at that place with an old aunt whose care allowed the girl to do as she pleased. Whenever Mark came in the vicinity of the ranch he always called upon the girl for her excellent vocative. They always gave him a hearty welcome, and Dora thought he was the most manly and chivalrous young man she had ever met. The girl was famous throughout five States as being a crack shot with rifle and pistol. As she was of an adventurous turn of mind, she frequently accompanied her aunt and his band of cowboys on their hunting trips.

She knew, of course, what had brought Mark out there this time, and the idea of helping him to catch real outlaws appealed to her. Mark, at first would not allow her to go with him on such a dangerous mission and refused to hearken to her pleas. But the moment the young man and his companions disappeared, she mounted her swiftest horse and started after them.

In trying to steer clear from them til. they were so far from Pine Bluff that they would not dare send her back when s! should show herself, she made a detour from the main trail, and struck into the secret cave. She had left her horse outside and came inside to explore the interior when she lost her way. She became confused and in a few minutes realized that she was hopelessly lost.

"Dora!" he called softly. "Dora, Dora! Mark, despite the fact that the fleeting figure before him paid no heed to his call was convinced that she was there and wondered what brought her to the place.

He called to her again, and still the girl hurried on without pausing. So feeble his voice had not reached her ears, but did not the girl hear? Suddenly the terrific cry which had alarmed Bill and Pete an hour before rang out again, and mingled with it was the sound of a woman's scream, a scream of horror.

Mark halted involuntarily for a moment and then rushed on with reckless speed. He [illegible] and was prepared to [illegible] itself upon Dora's assailant, for he knew it was Dora's voice, vibrant with [illegible].

In a second he had reached a little open space and beheld Dora gazing down a passage evidently too terrified to move.

"Courage, Dora," shouted Mark, clearing the space between them in a bound.

Just as he leaped he gave a quick glance about the cavern to see if there were any other entrance to it than the one he found he was assured that he had but one to cope with. Then his heart gave a great bound and stood still.

Dora had vanished.

In the second he had devoted to that lightning glance about the cavern, the girl had disappeared.

Hastily he examined the passage opening into the cavern, but could see no trace of Dora, or the man or object that had caused her terror and disappearance. All was Egyptian darkness and as still as death.

Then came faintly a distant cry: "Help! Help!"

Mark was sure that it was Dora's voice and dashed down the passage through which the cry seemed to come. His fear that she had fallen victim to some new manoeuvre of Bill's nefarious gang lent him wings and for a time he ran at top speed, scarcely heeding the ground.

In his haste, however, he stepped on a rolling stone and fell with a crash.

Right at his ear sounded that fiendish laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha!" it rang out in bloodcurdling tones.

Mark leaped to his feet and rushed to the side of the passage. No one was there.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the other side.

Mark dashed across, but he found nothing. In a rage, he fired twice at the darkness before him, but the shots were wasted on the empty air.

"Well, this beats me," he exclaimed. "I thought sure this business was engineered by Bill or one of his men, and they vanished in thin air."

"Ha, ha, ha!" sounded faintly behind him.

Mark was thoroughly bewildered by this time. First he heard a cry right in his ear, then at the other side of the cave, then before him, and now behind him. Where was the voice? Whose was it? What was it?

And where had Dora gone? He was sure that was her voice which had cried for help.

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and he was positive that she was overcome by terror when he caught his last glimpse of her.

Of what had she been afraid? And how had she disappeared?

Mark, stumbling along through the now tortuous passage, passed his hand confusedly across his forehead. His brain was in a whirl. He did not know what to think.

But bewildered and confused, one thought was clear in his mind.

"If anything befalls that brave girl through the work of Bill, or the least member of his gang, law or no law, he shall pay the penalty with his life! I will have no mercy now!"

Had Mark been where Dora was, for it was she he had seen, as he was wandering about the passage, his threat of vengeance would have become acts. The girl had never faced such danger before.

After Dora had wandered around the tortuous passages trying to find her way out, she saw signs of the place being inhabited, and she began to suspect that she had unexpectedly stumbled upon the haunts of the ruffianly gang that Mark Powers had set out to capture. She felt the necessity of exercising caution, until at least such a time that she should get her bearings, so that she could find her way out unaided.

This idea running in her mind gave color to the belief that the footsteps she heard when Mark came in her direction, were those of one of Cougar Bill's pals.

So it was she, running away from the young hero she admired so much, who would have instantly taken her under his protection.

Just as she reached the little open space where Mark had caught his last glimpse of her, a most frightful looking object suddenly presented itself before her eyes.

Barely had she uttered that first startling cry, when the creature leaped upon her, grasped her by the throat with one skinny claw, pressed another over her mouth and dragged her with incredible swiftness into the dark passage behind her.

It all happened so quickly that it seemed to her she was still gazing at the horrid vision when she became aware that she was being half dragged, half carried by the creature who had appeared with such startling suddenness.

The grasp upon her throat had relaxed, but one hand or claw was still clasped tightly across the mouth.

Their progress down that passage was incredibly swift and in a few moments they arrived in another cavern, illuminated with dazzling brilliancy.

Stalactites hung from the distant roof and the floor was littered with stalagmites.

Continuously, first in one set then in another, the space between the needle point of a stalactite and the cup of the stalagmite was bridged by a great sheet of white flame, so dazzling bright that electric light would have cast a shade. First between one set, then between another, every second these great flames would flare up.

At every second spout of flame, a hiss like that of escaping steam would mark the meeting of the gases.

The ghastly flashing lights, the constant hissing, the ghostlike appearance of the rocky festoons, all combined to form a scene which no pen can depict.

To Dora it was like a scene in the Inferno.

But she had little time for observation. Her captor threaded his way between these flashing flames with an assured step and bore her to a spot immediately under that great central spire. There he forced her into a sitting position on a block of stone and gazed down at her, his frightful visage transformed with fiendish glee, ghastly in that unearthly light.

Dora could now see that he was a man, or the relic of one. His dwarfed and stunted body was covered with fantastic and ragged garments. Upon his head and face the hair and beard had grown so profusely that he was more like a beast than like a man. His legs and arms were emaciated so much that he looked like a skeleton, and one might easily mistake his hands for the talons of some bird of prey.

His face was nearly hidden by his beard, only his eyes and mouth being visible. His eyes had the wide-open stare of insanity and now they positively glared, so that Dora, despite her will, shuddered.

He bent over her and shrieked in her ear:

"When your husband sees you again, you won't be so pretty."

"My husband!" Dora exclaimed in astonishment. "I have no husband."

"Don't you dare lie to me," shouted the madman with sudden fury. "I know; you cannot deceive me. These little serpents that hiss in these pillars of stone tell me everything, and they told me that you are Cougar Bill's wife! And now what do you think I am going to do with you?"

The moment he began to talk, Dora perceived that he was really insane and that the only way she could outwit him was by pretending to be whatever he wished. If she did this she might yet escape him. So instead of again denying that she was Cougar Bill's wife, she answered his last question.

"What are you going to do with me?"

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the madman. "I'm going to use you as a decoy. You cannot leave this place. There is only one path. If you step aside from that you will be instantly consumed by my lights. You do not know that path, so you cannot escape me."

Dora could not restrain a shudder.

The madman grinned more hideously than ever.

"Oh, I've got you now," he shouted. "And I'll let you starve to death, and then I'll fling your husband here and let him starve beside his wife's body. Ha, ha, ha!"

In spite of herself Dora shrieked for help.

Then the madman darted to one side and shouted a laugh through the floor. He shouted through a stalagmite and then ran back a little way and shouted again. Those were the cries that Mark heard in the passage.

Then he rushed back to the girl.

"Ha, ha, ha," he shouted. "Call for help, but none will come unless I show them the way and none may go without my guidance. Shout for help! You might as well cry for food—for neither food nor help shall you ever have in this life again!"

Dora leaped to her feet and drew her revolver from its holster, but before she could pull the trigger, the madman was upon her.

His strength was more than human. With one hand, he grasped her wrist so tightly that the revolver fell from her hand. With the other he seized her by the throat and forced her to her knees.

"You die now!" he yelled, his voice sounding like the shriek of the furies.

"The Ghost! the Ghost!"

CHAPTER III.

DORA'S WONDERFUL ESCAPE.

Dora half closed her eyes in expectation of being cast into one of the fountains of fire. The madman had thrown himself upon her so quickly that she hardly realized his purpose before it was too late to dodge to one side.

As she fell a sharp stone bruised her shoulders. It sank into the tender flesh, making a deep wound. Dora screamed and fainted from pain and sheer fright. A blessed unconsciousness shut out the horrible sight of the man's terrible expression and the fiery eyeballs that seemed to burn into her very soul.

Suddenly a sound fell upon the madman's ear.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

He listened for a moment as if he had heard a footstep.

"I thought that some one was coming," he muttered.

But what he heard was only the falling of a piece of rock which had rotted away where a spring leaked through the roof. The water had gradually worn a groove around a bit of quartz weighing about a pound. It was this that had distracted the madman's attention.

But it saved Dora's life; for it had dropped several yards beyond them in the corridor where it was pitch dark, and the madman could not distinguish the nature of the sound, it had fallen so far away from the brilliantly lighted cavern.

He supposed that some person was coming to the rescue of his victim. He did not like the idea of being interrupted in his murderous purpose, and consequently his insane rage was turned on the person who he supposed was approaching the fatal chamber.

"He will suffer for this!" exclaimed the maniac. "How dare any one interfere with me at this moment? She is mine and I can do whatever I wish with her. Ha! ha! ha! Catch me letting them get her from me now!"

He saw that the girl had fainted and was helplessly in his power.

"No danger of her escaping till I get back after settling with that intruder in the tunnel," he muttered.

He released his hold on Dora's pinioned arms, and the limp body fell heavily to the floor.

He picked up a boulder of five pounds weight, clutched in his hand ready to hurl at the head of the person in the passage, and dashed in the direction whence the sound issued. His whole mind was bent on summary vengeance against the individual who dared to come to the rescue of the girl. After running a hundred yards or so in the pitchy darkness he stopped and listened. But a dead stillness pervaded the air.

"Where are you going, you sneaking scoundrel?" he cried out in blind rage. "Just let me get my hands on your carcass for a moment, that's all I ask."

This increased the madman's anger, and he clutched his streaming hair with his left hand, tearing out several tufts.

"Don't try to hide from me, for you cannot escape!" And he continued to run through the gloomy galleries.

A moment after he halted, and, placing his ear to the rocky floor, listened attentively.

Far to the front of him he heard another loosened stone crash to the hard floor. But the sound was so indistinct that it deceived him, and he continued running after the imaginary footsteps.

It was lucky for Dora that the crashing of the second piece of rock occurred farther beyond the maniac, otherwise he would have returned and completed his murderous purpose.

When the second sound reached his ears it seemed to remove all doubt in his mind as to whether he had been deceived. He was convinced by this time that a living, breathing person was in front of him, but trying to make his escape instead of coming towards him. The echo of his own footfalls made him think that the sound was caused by another person doing his best to get away. He was even positive he had gained upon his intended victim, the patter of the feet seemed so near.

But the footsteps still eluded him, and he raced on, getting farther and farther away from Dora, who was yet unconscious and lay bruised and bleeding under the glare of the blinding light that beat pitilessly on her upturned face.

The madman was a tireless runner, and did not feel the fatigue of his exertions. But his patience finally gave way when he realized that he was not gaining on the footsteps in front of him. He suddenly halted, raised the boulder above his head, and threw it with all his might.

"Take that," he shouted.

The stone was hurled with prodigious force, and it struck a projecting ledge ten feet away. There was a crash that broke the stillness of the midnight gloom, and the boulder shattered the ledge into a thousand pieces.

When the maniac saw that the huge missile had not felled the person who he thought had been spying on his actions, but lay harmlessly at his feet, he uttered a terrible malediction on the fragments scattered about the corridors, as if they were an animated body.

Blinded with rage he fell upon his knees and gripped several pieces in both hands.

"They have played me false!" he yelled at the top of his voice.

The madman grovelled on the floor, throwing his hands wildly about his head. He clutched handfuls of the remaining fragments and scattered them to all points of the compass.

His screams and cries of disappointed rage were dreadful to hear. Finally the paroxysm passed off and left the poor wretch somewhat calmer. He sat there on the cold, damp floor with his legs crossed under him tailor fashion, and began to mumble incoherently to himself.

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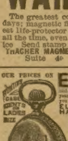

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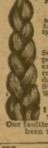

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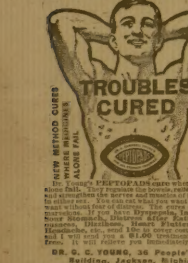

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won't—it can't—Cougar Bill and his wife are to be—

His confused mind refused to perform its proper functions any longer, and the maniac's head drooped on his breast, weary from the strain he had undergone during the last half-hour.

Suddenly the sound of a distant footstep reached that part of the corridor the maniac raised his head with a start, and peered in the dark tunnel before him.

"There it is this time, sure!"

He leaped to his feet holding a large piece of the broken bonded in his right hand, then drew back his arm and poised the stone to launch the missile at the approaching intruder.

A dark form could be seen picking its way cautiously towards the spot where the madman stood ready to dash his primitive weapon at the object the moment it got in range.

A look of triumph overspread his wild features, as he uttered a shrill cry. It was fortunate that the madman made this outcry before hurling the rock at the person approaching would have been taken unawares. As it was, he barely had time to look up and discover the purpose of the towering avenger facing him not ten yards away.

Mark Powers it was, the Bandit Scourge, who had just then lost his bearings as well as his girl-pard Dora, and was wandering aimlessly through the dark labyrinth, trying to find a way out to the shaft or tunnel he had left his band of cowboys before scouting in the neighborhood of the unknown cave.

Dora!

Mark ducked none too soon. If he had delayed a second he would have been stretched out upon the floor, probably never to rise again, for the madman's aim had been true, and with the momentum and quickness of the young man saved his life.

There was just enough light in the cavern for the outline of the two forms to be distinguishable.

Mark took the measure of his assailant and closed in on him.

"You misergly wretch," he cried as he grappled with the powerful madman, "I don't know who you are, but you are a despicable cur to lift a hand against the murder a stranger who has never wronged you and whom, indeed, you know not."

"Ha! ha! I ain't so sure about that," replied the other.

"I've heard that peculiar laugh before," thought Mark, as he struggled to get his fingers on the man's throat, "but I recognize now, that is the same laugh that sounded in Cougar Bill's cabin. That fellow must be one of the band."

Then Mark spoke aloud: "Was your chief, Cougar Bill, has told you to hide here and kill me?"

With this shouted in the ear of the madman, Mark secured a tight grip on the maniac's windpipe.

This accusation seemed to act like magic on the insane man, and he redoubled his powers of resistance. He threw himself out of Mark's grasp, and then he leaped for the young man.

"You lie," he cried vehemently, "you yourself are to die. Cougar Bill says I am going to leave your body here in its tracks for Cougar Bill to see what will happen to himself when I get out of the cave and to the throne."

"Well, you will have to do better than that," laughed Mark, as he dodged to one side, out of the maniac's reach, as he always catch your hare before cooking the stew."

Mark avoided the furious rushes of his antagonist for he knew that the man possessed of superhuman strength and would quickly succeed in landing a rough and tumble. He had underestimated the prowess of the fellow at the beginning of the struggle.

Mark decided to trust no longer to his physical strength in the encounter with one but, so he put his hands to his revolver, intending to draw it and cover the individual confronting him, but Mark hammed caught in a torn slit in his jacket before the weapon could be released in time to prevent the madman making another of his fearful rushes.

The next instant Mark felt himself in a grasp from which there was no hope of release.

"You young whelp! Your day has come this time, and there is no mistake about it," the madman hissed as he held Mark in a grasp that seemed to crush the life out of him.

The Bandit Scourge did not answer, but gritted his teeth and put forth energies to the struggle that meant life or death to one of the combatants.

Two men were locked in a deadly embrace. They swayed from side to side, each trying to get a hold that would mean an advantage.

"What is the matter with me?" reflected Mark, as he felt that he was beginning to succumb to the superior strength of the ragged and dirty creature who held him in a grip of iron. "It can't be that I have suddenly lost my strength. I've put out bigger men than this one."

"Ha! ha!"

"That terrible laugh so inhuman in its tones," thought Mark.

A light suddenly dawned upon him.

"This man is as mad as a March hare!" he thought.

For a moment the stout heart of Mark Powers almost failed him, for he knew that a wrestling bout between powerful men is a fit of madness, and that a man of ordinary strength develops the muscles of a herculean giant under the same circumstances.

It was an unequal contest, for Mark was battling with a man gifted with the strength of ten men.

Gradually his powers of resistance grew weaker and weaker. The maniac had the upper hand. One arm was around Mark's waist, while the madman's left forearm was under the young fellow's chin, forcing him backward.

It was a terrible fight, and Mark knew that he was looking into the face of death. He nerved himself for one last hopeless effort to free himself from the deadly grasp.

But he was like a baby huhy in the arms of his antagonist. He feared that his time had come at last, and offered up a prayer to Heaven, as he felt his senses gradually leaving him.

The next instant he was lying flat on his back, the horrible, grinning madman kneeling on his chest. The murderous creature held a jagged rock in his hand, and the arm descended to deliver a crushing blow on the head of the young man!

CHAPTER IV.
FIRED UPON.

After the madman dropped Dora and ran after the imaginary Cougar Bill she lay in a dead faint for some time. If he had returned within the next fifteen minutes nothing could have saved the young girl from a horrible death at his hands.

While Mark Powers was battling for his life with the same vindictive creature, Dora was beginning to come out of her faint.

"Where am I?" she cried, and looked around in dazed condition of mind. She rubbed her eyes and tried to get her bewildered senses.

"That light! This strange looking place! How did I get here?" she exclaimed, still unable to understand what it all meant.

By struggling to her feet she discovered her shoulder gave a sharp twinge. She moved about more carefully.

It was covered with blood!

Yes, I remember now the terrible experience she had just passed through all came back to her.

She bound up the wound as best she could, but the bruised shoulder ached and throbbed painfully.

When she finally realized that she had escaped from the madman, she looked around cautiously to see if anyone was near, unable to conceive of her assailant being deterred from his fell purpose by the timely interference of a rock accidentally dislodged and falling to the floor.

"Alone! Where is that monster? Quick! I must get away before he returns."

She had no sooner discovered her revolver which the madman had cast aside when she tried to draw it to defend herself. She picked it up, and hastened from the spot before the maniac was quite gone. Casting one last hateful glance behind her she plunged into the darkness of the tunnel before her.

"I hope that I may not meet him on his way back. He would probably kill me outright again, this time to finish me." Dora shuddered at the thought of what would happen if the maniac she should run into the man on his return.

Then she discovered her revolver which the madman had cast aside when she tried to defend herself. She picked it up, and hastened from the spot before the maniac was quite gone. Casting one last hateful glance behind her she plunged into the darkness of the tunnel before her.

"I hope that I may not meet him on his way back. He would probably kill me outright again, this time to finish me." Dora shuddered at the thought of what would happen if the maniac she should run into the man on his return.

She had no more than utt

Priceless Manuscripts.

To the rear of the main pavilion, on the second floor of the Congressional Library, stretches the storage room—a hall more than 200 feet long by nearly 40 in width. It is shelved with three tiers of metal cases, the lower of which is enclosed in glass, tightly set, with locked doors. In the alcoves opposite the wide windows are 29 large safes, burglar proof, with combination locks.

In these cases and safes are now housed the manuscript collections. Among them are the volumes which, until recently transferred to the library, have formed a distinction of the Department of State; the papers of the Continental Congress—in more than 300 folio volumes—the papers of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, among the Presidents; of Hamilton, Franklin and other statesmen. Continuing the Presidential series are the papers of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, acquired by the library by gift, and of Franklin Pierce, James K. Polk and Andrew Johnson, acquired by purchase. The papers of Salmon P. Chase and a large collection of papers of Daniel Webster fit in usefully in their appropriate epochs.

Back of these in date and touching another side of our history are the papers—including the letter and log-books—of Commodore Preble and many of Commodores Barry and Porter. Brilliant earlier passages in the achievements of our navy and the career of the most picturesque of its heroes are in the twelve volumes of papers of John Paul Jones.

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Just the Place.

"Would you not like to fly with me to some hidden part of the world," asks the enamored youth, "where the false conventions of modern society are things unknown, where the hampering requirements of our present civilization are unheard of, where the people live near to nature's heart, dreaming naught of our silly changes of fashion, knowing naught of the allurements of hats and dresses and——"

"O, Harold!" exclaims the sweet young thing, "is there such a place? O, how wonderful it would be to go there!"

"Do you mean that you would go?" he cries, his voice thrilling with a wondrous upsurging of soul.

"Would I? It would be heavenly! Think of being able to introduce all the latest things in bridge and shirtwaists and bonnets among those women, and make them realize what frightful back-numbers they are!"—Life.

When a married man begins to tell his domestic troubles to his mother it usually indicates a divorce suit.

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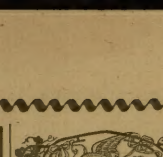

FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

THE WONDER PLACE.

I'm goin' to my grandpa's when
Thanksgivin' is—an' we'll go on
Th' train th' longest ways, an' then
He'll say: "Wy! Is this little John?"
An' nen he'll let me dwive his team
An' laugh 'whenue I swing th' whip
An' try to "Tehk!" an' let can't seem
To got th' right twist on my lip.

An' nen we'll dwive right up th' lane
Ah' to th' house where gramma is—
An' she'll be at th' window pane
An' nen say: "Bless that heart o' his!"
An' hug me tight, an take me to
Th' fwelpiece where it's nice an' warm
An' say 'whfore th' day is through
She ain't su'prised if it'll storm.

Where grampa lives—wy, at's th' place
"Thanksgivin' is—an' there's a day
'At jumps on me an' licks my face
An' nen hurls in a holler log;
An' 'ere's a calf 'at looks at me
Like it don't like th' things I weared,
But I let laugh so it can't see
At I'm a-gettin' halfway scared.

An' 'ere's a field 'at's fat as wide!
Wy! cornshocks runnin' for miles,
An' rabbits 'at will jump an' hide
Nen hop on every little whiles.
An' 'ere's a barn where sheep stay
An' where's a grindstone an' a maul,
And you can slide down on it hay
An' grampa let don't care at all.

My grampa an' my grammy, 'ey
Say 'at I got my papa's hair—
An' he an' me are purty gay
I sleep in 'at big rockin' chair.
At's grampa all, at 'ere is a dive
Me cookies; an' she's got a cat
At sings! Don't you know where they live?
Wy 'ere's th' place Thanksgivin's at!

—W. D. N.

Two Thanksgiving Dinners.

There was not much chance that the two little Welch girls would have a Thanksgiving dinner that year, and all the town and girls in the District No. 3 school knew it.

The girls' mother had warned them early, so that they would not be disappointed. Usually she only told them a day or two about it. She had been sick for weeks and there was hardly enough money to be had to keep them all from hunger and cold.

The two Putnam children, however, were not satisfied to have their little friends go without a Thanksgiving dinner, and with native self-reliance they went about righting the matter, without thinking to ask their parents to do it.

Little Timothy and Molly counted their pennies, but 20 cents was all they had, and they knew it would cost 75 at least to get good chicken at Deacon Ware's, who had some for sale. Then the boy remembered that the deacon was buying nuts and that they were so scarce he had offered 15 cents a quart for good chestnuts. So on Saturday morning away went the two children to the hills near by, came racing by after a squirrel which ran into a hole at the foot of the tree. They watched him pop vainly at the entrance to the squirrels' house and then Miss Timothy got a rail from the fence and prodded up a big stone which lay against the tree trunk.

Thus, unexpectedly, he discovered the treasury of the little creatures' home. Two or three quarts of chestnuts, a few acorns and a dozen hickory nuts were ready to be put into the bags they had brought.

"There!" cried the boy. "Now we shall have money for that Thanksgiving dinner."

"Yes," said Molly, "that little fellow just had them picked up for us. I guess the reason we could find them was that the squirrels got them all before we came."

"Well," said the boy as he began to put the nuts into his pail, "I'm 'fraid this fellow will be hungry sometime this winter, if he doesn't fly around and pick up some more."

"Why, little Timothy," exclaimed his sister. "I never thought a single thing about that. If we take those chestnuts that squirrel will starve to death and freeze right up."

"Well," was the reply, "we have to take them, don't we?"

They stopped to think about it, and almost tearfully, under the influence of Molly's argument, the brother yielded the point and the children rolled the stone back into place to begin again their search for the nuts that should bring the needed 36 cents.

Just then they became aware that Neighbor Robinson was watching them as he leaned over the rail fence, and as they saw his twinkling eyes rolled the tears away. "Pretty careful of the animals, seems to me," he remarked. Then without waiting for a reply, he added, "Guess you are about right, though. My hickory nuts needn't picking up, and if you will go over and help my boys this afternoon I will give you 25 cents each of your own."

All the morning and until the horn blew for dinner the children worked with little beavers. They went home proudly with their money and a pail of nuts which had been given to them, to tell their story to their mother.

Thus it came about that not only was there money for the chicken, but two squirrels had their Thanksgiving dinner also, and although they had not heard about the Governor's proclamation, I am sure they felt very grateful for their blessings.

When the neighbors heard what the Putnam children had done, Mrs. Welch and her children not only had an abundant dinner, but found friends and good paying work for the long cold winter.

THAT CUSSED THING FOLLOWS ME EVERY WHERE
I feel so very nervous
The Turkey Gobbler said
I fear I'll loose my reason
If I do not loose my Head

A Camel's Back.

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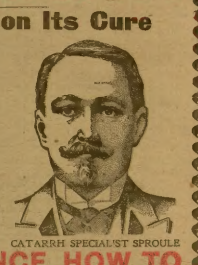

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Do you have to spit often?
Is your nose sore?
Are you worse in damp weather?
Is your voice hoarse?
Have you lost your sense of smell?
Does your mouth taste bad mornings?
Do you have a cold frequently?
Do you have to clear your throat often?
Is there a trickling sensation in your throat?
Do you have a discharge from the nose?
Does the nasal drop to back of throat?

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